

Eight chapters of Maimonides on Ethics by Maimonides, translated by Samuel ibn Tibbon & Joseph Isaac Gorfinkle

Introduction

I

THE OBJECT OF MAIMONIDES' WORKS. THE COMMENTARY ON THE MISHNAH. THE SHEMONAH PERAKIM

DURING the lifetime of Maimonides, there were many who bitterly assailed him, declaring that his Talmudical knowledge was faulty, that his writings were un-Jewish, that he sought to introduce strange elements into Judaism, and that he desired his works to supersede the Talmud.^[1] Some of Maimonides' opponents were animated by a spirit of true criticism, but other attacks made upon him were partly due to personal feelings of envy.^[2] The opposition continued for a while after Maimonides' death, but it was not long before the true character of this master's works became universally recognized. The feeling, minus the personal element, that Maimonides wished to have his works take the place of the Talmud, has, however, persisted to this day. Thus, we find Luzzatto^[3] stating that Maimonides wrote his *Mishneh Torah* in order to do away with the study of the Babylonian Talmud. Beer, supporting the same opinion, maintains that Maimonides saw the disadvantages of the study of the Talmud, was aware of the uselessness of some of its parts, and considered its extended study a waste of time.^[4] As proof of this he quotes from the introduction to the *Mishneh Torah* the famous sentence, "I have named this work *Mishneh Torah* for the reason that if any one has read the *Torah* and then this work, he would know the Biblical and oral law without having to read any other book." Geiger^[5] maintains that Maimonides' object was merely to shorten the study of the Talmud.

There are those, however, who take exception to this view. Rosin^[6] says, "From the very beginning the Talmud alone was the object of his study." Worldly knowledge and philosophy were merely used by Maimonides as instruments for explaining and glorifying the divine teaching. He considered the rabbis to be second only in rank and greatness to the prophets, and held their writings in equally high esteem. On the face of it, the quotation cited from the *Mishneh Torah* would seem to prove the assertion made above, but this passage may be interpreted to prove exactly the opposite; that far from being his object to discourage the study of the Talmud, he wished to spread its knowledge among those who for any reason were unable to have access to it, or who could not devote sufficient time to master it. "It is a gross injustice often done to Maimonides," says I. Friedlaender, "to accuse him of having the intention to supersede the Talmud entirely. . . . He considered the Talmud as a

most worthy object of study, but only for scholars. The people, however, are not scholars and cannot devote the whole of life to learning. For the mass of people alone he intended to supersede the Talmud by a comprehensive extract from it." Ziemlich, finally, asserts that Maimonides did not desire to put an end to the study of the Talmud, but rather to cast it into scientific form.^[7]

Although this decided difference of opinion as to Maimonides' attitude towards the Talmud still exists, all, however, agree ^[10]

The most important of his works which have had a profound influence upon Judaism are his *Commentary on the Mishnah* (פירוש המשנה), the *Mishneh Torah* (משנה תורה) or *Yad ha-Ḥazakah* (יד החזקה), and the *Guide for the Perplexed* (מורה נבוכים).

The Commentary on the Mishnah,^[11] Maimonides' first work of importance, written in Arabic,^[12] was begun at the age of twenty-three (1158), in Spain, and was completed at the age of thirty-three^[13] (1168), after he had taken up his residence in Egypt. In this Talmudic work of his early manhood, Maimonides scarcely had a predecessor.^[14] Though one of his earliest works, and in spite of the difficulties in writing it during years of wandering and seeking a secure home, with no books accessible, the *Commentary* is a marvel of lucidity, masterful knowledge, and comprehensiveness. Grätz attributes its existence to the author's striving for "clearness, method, and symmetry."^[15] The fact that it is so often referred to in his later writings testifies that at a very early date Maimonides had outlined for himself a thorough philosophical system and a literary scheme from which he subsequently deviated only slightly.^[16] Most of the theories and principles established in the *Commentary* were retained in the *Mishneh Torah*.^[17]

The greater part of the *Commentary* was not translated into Hebrew until after his death. The general introduction to this work and parts of the order *Zera'im* were translated by Jehudah al-Ḥarizi (1194); *Mo'ed* by Joseph ibn al-Fawwal; *Nashim* by Jaḳob ibn Abbas; *Neziḳin* by Salomon b. Josef ibn Ya'kub; *Ḳodashim* by Nathanel ibn Almoli (or Almali); and *Tohorot* by an anonymous translator.^[18] The commentary on *Sanhedrin*, Chapter X, was translated probably by Al-Ḥarizi, and also by Samuel ibn Tibbon.

In commenting on the tractate *Abot*, Maimonides had abundant opportunity to make use of his knowledge of Greek philosophy and particularly of Aristotelian ethics. To this tractate he prefixed an introduction of eight chapters, outlining in a general way a system of ethics based mainly on Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*,^[19] which Maimonides harmonized with rabbinical teachings. This introduction constitutes the most remarkable instance in medieval ethical literature of the harmonious welding of Jewish religious belief and tradition with Greek philosophy.

For the rendering into Hebrew of the *Commentary on Abot* and its introduction commonly called שמונה פרקים (The Eight Chapters), Samuel ibn Tibbon, who

was at work on the translation of the *Moreh*, was eminently fitted.

The *Shemonah Peraḳim* have always been widely read among the Jews and students of the philosophy of Maimonides on account of their simplicity of style and subject matter, and no less on account of their accessibility, being found in all editions of the *Mishnah* and *Talmud*^[20] that contain Maimonides' commentary, in a number of *Maḥzorim*,^[21] especially of the Roman and Greek ritual, and also in various separate editions.^[22] Their popularity is evidenced by the fact that they have been translated into Latin, French, Dutch, English, and many times into German.^[23]

An examination, however, of the Hebrew text of the *Peraḳim* in the editions of the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud*, in the *Maḥzorim*, and the many separate publications, at once shows that no two agree, and that each is in many instances in a corrupt state. A like examination of the manuscript sources bears the same result. Again, if any individual text, even that of the best manuscript, be placed beside the original Arabic in Pococke's *Porta Mosis*^[24] or Wolff's *Acht Capitel*, one would find many divergences. It may be safely stated that there is not in existence to-day, in any form, a text of the *Shemonah Peraḳim* which in its entirety is a faithful reproduction of the version of Ibn Tibbon. By a selective process based on a collation of the best texts, with the Arabic as a constant guide, it is possible, however, to reconstruct the *Shemonah Peraḳim*, so that almost every corrupt reading can be rectified. The purpose of this work is to restore and elucidate linguistically the text of Ibn Tibbon as far as possible, and by a translation make it accessible to readers of English.

As this is mainly a textual work, its aim is not to treat with any degree of detail Maimonides' ethics, its sources, Jewish or Greek, and its place in Jewish philosophy, all of which has been admirably done by Rosin in his *Ethik*. But, in order to obtain a more complete knowledge of the *Peraḳim* and the theories laid down therein, the editor deems it well to mention and describe Maimonides' other ethical writings, the place of ethics in his philosophical system, and what ethics meant to him. The name and the date of the original composition of the *Peraḳim*, as well as that of its translation by Ibn Tibbon, will be discussed. The relation of the *Peraḳim* to Maimonides' other works will be taken up, followed by a characterization and summary of their contents. A brief account of the style and character of Ibn Tibbon's translations in general, and as portrayed in the *Peraḳim*, will also be given. There is also included a list of manuscripts, editions, commentaries, and translations.

II

A. MAIMONIDES' ETHICAL WRITINGS—DEFINITION OF ETHICS

THE works in which Maimonides presents his ethical teachings are as follows:—

- I. *Commentary on the Mishnah*^[25] (פירוש המשנה), in many places, but especially in:
 - a. *General Introduction to the Mishnah Commentary* (פתיחת פירוש המשנה)^[26];
 - b. *Introduction to Sanhedrin, Chapter X* (פרק חלק)^[27];
 - c. *Introduction to Abot* (פתיחת אבות or שמונה פרקים)^[28];
 - d. *Commentary on Abot*.^[29]
- II. *Book of Commandments* (ספר המצוות)^[30], in various places.
- III. *MISHNEH TORAH*^[31] (1170–1180) (משנה תורה), scattered references, but especially in:

Book of Knowledge (ספר המדע) in the *Treatise on Beliefs* (הלכות דעות), and in the *Treatise on Repentance* (הלכות תשובה).^[32]
- IV. *MOREH NEBUKIM* (מורה נבוכים)^[33], in many places, but especially Part III, Chapters 51–54.
- V. Scattered references in his minor works, as:
 - a. *Terminology of Logic*^[34] (מלות ההגיון);
 - b. *Treatise on the Unity of God*^[35] (מאמר הייחוד);
 - c. *Various Responsa* (תשובות); *Letters* (אגרות); and *Medical Aphorisms* (פרקי משה).^[36]

In his *Terminology of Logic*^[37] (מלות ההגיון), Maimonides divides philosophy into two divisions: theoretical (הפילוסופיא העיונית), and practical philosophy (הפילוסופיא המעשית).^[38] The latter he also terms “human philosophy” (פילוסופיא אנושית), or “political science” (החכמה המדינית). Under theoretical philosophy he groups mathematics, physics, and metaphysics. Under practical philosophy are found ethics (הנהגת האדם נפשו), household economy (הנהגת הבית), the science of government (הנהגת המדינה), and politics in its broadest sense (הנהגת האומה הגדולה או האומות).

Ethics, or the science of self-guidance, consists, on the one hand, in acquiring for one’s self noble soul-qualities or characteristics (המדות הנכבדות), and, on the other hand, of avoiding evil qualities (המדות הפחותות). These qualities,

whether good or bad, are called *states* or *conditions* (תכונות), and when acquired each is known as a *property* (קנין). Noble qualities are called *virtues* (מעלות המדות), while the *vices* are termed פחיתיות המדות. The virtues cause good deeds (הפעולות הטובות), the vices, bad ones (הפעולות הרע). Ethics is the science of virtues or of good deeds.^[39]

B. NAME, DATE, DESCRIPTION, AND CONTENTS OF THE *SHEMONAH PERAKIM*

The *Shemonah Perakim*, in Maimonides' system, come, accordingly, under the head of ethics (הנהגת האדם נפשו), which in turn is a branch of practical philosophy (הפילוסופיא המעשית). They are divided into eight chapters, from which fact the name is derived. This division undoubtedly goes back to Maimonides himself, who, in his short introduction to the *Perakim*, says "and they are eight chapters."^[40] The Arabic equivalent is *Thamaniaṭ Fuṣūl*, which Wolff uses as a title for his edition of the Arabic text. It seems, however, that neither of these titles originated with Maimonides, for, in *Moreh*, III. 35, in referring to the *Perakim*, he calls them the *Preface to Abot*.^[41] Whether Ibn Tibbon used the title *Shemonah Perakim*, it is difficult to ascertain.^[42] The simplicity of the title has fortunately been the cause of avoiding confusion as to its exact meaning, which is not the case with the title *Moreh Nebukim*.^[43]

The date of composition of the *Perakim* cannot be accurately determined. All that can be said is that it was written sometime between 1158 and 1165, along with the rest of the commentary on the *Mishnah*, which was made public in 1168.^[44] As to the translation, the only source of information regarding its date is the manuscript Parma R. 438⁶, which in a note states that the *Commentary on Abot* was translated by Samuel ibn Tibbon in *Tebet* 963, which is the year 1202.^[45]

Although written originally as an introduction to the commentary on the *Pirke Abot*, for the purpose of explaining in advance problems that Maimonides brings up in the course of his commentary, the *Perakim* form in themselves a complete system of psychology^[46] and ethics,^[47] so much so that Rosin, in writing on this phase of Maimonides' activity, uses them as a basis of his discussion in the first half of his *Ethik*, in which he takes up Maimonides' general ethics. They do not, however, form an exhaustive treatment of this subject, as Maimonides himself states, but with a reference here and there to some other of his works may be easily made to do so.^[48] The *Mishnah Commentary* as a whole was written for those who were unable or not disposed to study the Talmud, and for those who were, to facilitate its study. Its philosophical and psychological parts were intended for those who, though they had a knowledge of the Talmud, were unacquainted with philosophical problems, or were unable to harmonize them with Jewish thought. The *Perakim*, consequently, being intended for readers not necessarily versed in philosophy, and some not being deep students of the Talmud, avoid all

intricate philosophical and Talmudical discussions. For students versed both in the Talmud and in philosophy, Maimonides wrote his *Moreh Nebukim*, the object of which was to bring into harmony Talmudical Judaism and [peripatetic](#) philosophy as developed among the Arabs. Thus, the *Mishnah Commentary*, in which the rabbinical and the philosophical elements are successfully harmonized and blended, leads the way to Maimonides' masterpiece, the *Moreh*. The *Peraḳim*, then, may be looked upon as an introduction to Maimonidean philosophy, and may be profitably studied by the student before he attacks the problems contained in the *Moreh*. They may be briefly described as a treatise on the soul, its characteristics and powers, and their employment towards the goal of moral perfection.^[49]

Chapter I is psychological in character. It deals with moral life, the sources of which reside in the soul (נפש) and its powers (כחות). The soul is a unit having various *activities* (פעולות) called *powers* (כחות), and at times *parts* (חלקים). Medical authors speak, however, of many souls, as, for instance, Hippocrates, who says there are three souls,—the physical (טבעית), the vital (חיונית), and the psychical (נפשית). The improvement of morals (תקון המדות) is the cure of the soul and its powers. Therefore, just as the physician must know about the body as a whole as well as its individual parts, so must the moral physician know of the soul and all its powers or *parts*. There are five *parts* to the human soul: (1) the nutritive (הזון); (2) the perceptive (המרגיש); (3) the imaginative (המדמה); (4) the appetitive (המתעורר), and (5) the rational (השכלי). Other beings are spoken of as having these powers, but they are essentially different from those of man, whose soul, as the bearer of human properties, is not the same as that of other creatures, as the horse, the ass, or the eagle.

The nutritive part of the soul has seven powers, or properties: (1) the power of attraction (המושך); (2) the power of retention (המחזיק); (3) the power of digestion (המעכל); (4) the power of repelling superfluities (הדוחה למותרות); (5) the power of growth (המגדל); (6) the power of propagation (המוליד בדומה), and (7) the power of differentiation between the nutritive humors (ליחות) and those to be repelled.

The *perceptive part* consists of the five senses, seeing (הראות), hearing (השמע), smelling (הריח), tasting (הטעם), and feeling (המשוש).

The *imaginative part* is the power of retaining impressions of objects even when they do not perceptibly affect the senses, and of combining them in different ways, so that the imagination constructs out of originally real things those that never have nor can exist. The *Mutakallimun* overlook this truth as regards the imagination, which they make the corner-stone of their philosophical system.

The *appetitive part* is the power to long for a thing or to shun it. From this there results the seeking after or fleeing from a person or thing; inclination and avoidance; anger and satisfaction; fear and bravery; cruelty and compassion, and many other qualities (מקרים, *accidents*) of the soul. The organs of this power are all parts of the body.

The *rational part* is the power peculiar to man by which he understands, thinks, acquires knowledge, and discriminates between proper and improper actions. This manifold activity of the *rational part* is both practical and speculative. The practical activities are partly mechanical (מלאכת מחשבת) and partly intellectual. The speculative activities are the powers of man by which he knows things which, by their nature, are not subject to change. These are called the *sciences*. The mechanical power is that by which man learns the arts, as that of architecture, agriculture, medicine, or navigation. The intellectual power is that by which man reflects upon the possibility or manner of doing an intended action. The soul, which is a unit, but which has many powers or *parts*, bears the same relation to the intellect (השכל) as matter does to form.

Chapter II, like Chapter I, is psychological in character.^[50] It deals with the powers of the soul, obedient or disobedient to the Law, and the determination of the *parts* which produce virtues or vices. Violations (עבירות) and observances (מצוות) of the Law are found only in two of the *parts* of the soul, namely, the *perceptive* and the *appetitive*. The *nutritive* and the *imaginative* have no violations nor observances connected with them, since these powers have neither knowledge nor choice. There is some doubt as regards the *rational* power, but if it has violations and observances, they are, respectively, beliefs in false or true doctrines.

Virtues are of two kinds, ethical virtues (מעלות המדות) and intellectual virtues (מעלות השכליות). Their opposites are the two kinds of vices. Intellectual virtues are found in the *rational part*. These virtues are *wisdom* (חכמה), which is the knowledge of the near and remote causes (סבות) of things based on a previous knowledge of their existence; *reason* (שכל), which in turn comprises (a) innate, theoretical reason (השכל העיוני והוא הנמצא לנו בטבע); (b) acquired reason (השכל הנקנה); (c) sagacity (זכות התבונה), or intellectual cleverness (טוב ההבנה), or the ability to quickly understand a thing. The vices of this power are the opposites of these virtues. The ethical virtues belong only to the *appetitive part*, and in this connection the *perceptive part* is subservient to the *appetitive*. The virtues of this power are very numerous. They are moderation (זהירות); liberality (נדיבות); probity (ישר); meekness (ענוה); humility (שפלות הרוח); contentedness (הסתפקות); bravery (גבורה), and

uprightness (אמונה). The vices of this power consist of an exaggeration or a deficiency of these virtues. The *nutritive* and the *imaginative* powers have neither vices nor virtues.

The diseases of the soul (חליי הנפש) are described in Chapter III. The ancient philosophers laid down the dictum that the soul, like the body, can be healthy or sick. A healthy soul is in such a condition (תכונה) that only good and honorable deeds flow from it. The opposite is true of a diseased soul. Just as the physically sick desire things that are bad for them, but which they consider good, so do those whose souls are ill seek the bad and the evil, thinking that they are good. Furthermore, just as those whose bodies are diseased consult a physician and take medicines that are unpleasant to the taste in order that they may be restored to a healthy condition, so must the morally ill consult the wise men (החכמים), who are the physicians of the soul (רופאי נפש), and ascertain from them what are the bad and what are the good deeds. They must follow the advice of the soul-physicians, even though what they prescribe be distasteful. If a person is physically ill, and does not consult a physician, his end will be premature death, and, likewise, one morally ill, who does not seek the advice of the sages, will experience a moral death.

Chapter IV deals with the cure of the diseases of the soul. In agreement with Aristotle, Maimonides declares that actions are good when they follow a medium course between two extremes which are both bad. Virtues are conditions (תכונות) of the soul and characteristics which are midway between two states, one of which is excessive and the other deficient. Thus, generosity is the mean between sordidness (כילות) and extravagance (פזור); courage (גבורה), the mean between recklessness (מסירה לסכנות) and cowardice (רך הלבב); humility (ענוה), that between haughtiness (גאווה) and self-abasement (שפלות הרוח), and so forth. People often consider one or the other extreme a virtue, as when they praise the reckless man as being brave, or the lazy as being contented. To cure a person who is morally unsound, that is who performs deeds which go to the one or the other extreme, he should be made to practise the opposite extreme until his original fault has been remedied. That is, if a man is *niggardly*, he must practise deeds of extravagance until his niggardliness disappears. Then he is instructed to stop his extravagance, and follow the medium course of generosity. Man must constantly guard his actions that they maintain the proper balance between exaggeration and deficiency. By this means he gains the highest degree of human perfection, comes nearer to God, and partakes of His eternal blessings. This is the most perfect form of reverencing the Deity. Maimonides ends the chapter by harmonizing the philosophical and Talmudical views in regard to man's powers of weighing his actions and following the proper mean. The directing of the powers of one's soul towards a certain goal is the subject of Chapter V. Man's one aim in life should be to understand God. All his

actions and words should be so arranged as to accomplish this purpose, and consequently he should seek not the most pleasant but the most useful things. The body should be kept in a healthy condition for the sake of the purity of the soul. When one partakes of food that is pleasant but dangerous to the health, he is like a senseless beast. Man acts sensibly only when all his actions are aimed at gaining bodily welfare and spiritual superiority. Science and education aid in this; for the study of algebra, geometry, and mechanics sharpens one's intellect, and enables one to understand the truth of the proofs of God's existence. Man ought to direct his words towards this goal. He should speak only of such things as will benefit his soul, or avert danger from his body. In consequence of this, man will desist from many ordinary actions and words. He will not think of beautifying the walls of his house with costly decorations or his clothes with expensive embroideries, unless it be done for the purpose of spiritual uplifting. Such an aim is lofty and difficult of attainment, but one accomplishing it ranks as high as does a prophet. The rabbis have most wonderfully and concisely expressed this sentiment by the saying, "Let all your actions be for the sake of God." (*Abot* II, 12.)

In Chapter VI,^[51] Maimonides discusses the difference between the saintly man (החסידי המעולה) and the one who curbs his desires (הכובש את יצרו)

(והמושל את נפשו). Agreeing with Aristotelian philosophy, Maimonides asserts that the truly virtuous man practises the good as a result of an innate inclination to do so. He is superior to the one who, though he may do deeds equally good, yet in order to accomplish them, must subdue his desires which are of an evil nature. That is, the *condition* of the saint's soul is better than that of the man who subdues his passions. Proverbs XXI. 10, "The soul of the wicked longeth for evil," agrees with this sentiment. The rabbis, however, seem to contradict this opinion by saying that he who has evil thoughts and desires, but who conquers them, is greater than he who has no battle to fight. They even maintain that the greater a man is, the more powerful are his desires. On the face of it, the opinions of the rabbis and the philosophers seem to disagree. But here Maimonides uses his wonderful ability as a harmonizer of philosophical and rabbinical doctrines. He explains away the contradiction by stating that the philosophers meant by the desires for evil the inclination to commit such transgressions as murder, stealing, deceit, and so forth. The laws forbidding these are called by the rabbis "commandments" (מצוות), or "ordinances" (משפטים). There is no doubt that a soul that desires any of these grave evils is a bad soul. There is, however, another kind of less important transgressions, the performance of which is prohibited by statutes (חקים). It is in reference to these evils, and not to the first mentioned, that the rabbis say that if a man desires, but conquers them, his reward is great. These are, for instance, the partaking of meat and milk together, or the wearing of clothes made of two different materials. The rabbis would not say, any more than the philosophers, that the man who desires to murder but refrains from doing so is greater than the one who never desires to murder.

In Chapter VII, Maimonides discusses the *partitions* or *walls* (מחיצות) which separate man from God, and also describes what prophecy is. As explained in Chapter II, there are intellectual and moral virtues, and their opposite vices. These vices, which are termed *partitions*, prevent man from beholding God. As many vices, intellectual or moral, a man has, by so many *partitions* is he separated from God. The prophets "looked upon" God from behind the least number of *partitions*. The fewer they were, the higher was the rank of the prophet. Three virtues the prophets, however, must have, which Maimonides deduces from the rabbinical saying, "Prophecy rests only upon the wise, the brave, and the rich." The wise man is the one who possesses all intellectual virtues. The brave man is he who conquers his desires. The rich man is the one who is satisfied with his lot. Moses was the only prophet in whom all moral and intellectual virtues were combined. The only *partition* or *wall* between him and God was his physical body, from which the spirit of man cannot divorce itself on earth. This *partition* the rabbis call *specularia*,^[52] a transparent wall, through which Moses gazed upon the highest truth, but not as one does with human eyes.

The interesting problem of the freedom of will, in which again Maimonides successfully blends the philosophical and the rabbinical doctrines, is taken up in Chapter VIII. Maimonides begins with the statement that man is not born with either virtues or vices, just as he is not born skilled in an art. He may, however, have a predisposition towards a certain characteristic, but every man's temperament is equally susceptible to virtue as well as to vice. It is man's moral duty to encourage any predilection he may have towards virtue, and to stamp out any desire for the vicious. No virtue is unattainable; there is no vice that cannot be avoided, no matter what man's natural bent may be. The developing of what is good and the conquering of what is bad may be accomplished by instruction, guidance, and habit. Astrologers, however, and those who believe with them, maintain that a man's destiny, his conduct in life, in fact, all his actions, are determined according to the constellation under which he is born. This belief Maimonides denounces as ridiculous. The rabbis and the philosophers alike agree in the belief that man has absolute free choice, and that he alone is responsible for his actions. If this were not so, all commands and prohibitions of the law would be in vain. All learning, teaching, and effort of all kinds would be useless if man's actions, knowledge, and characteristics were determined by an outside power. If such were the case, reward and punishment would be unjust; for no matter how much a man would try to do a certain deed, if it were predetermined that he should not do it, he would be unable to perform it. If Simeon killed Reuben, it would be unjust to punish Simeon; for he did not kill of his own volition, but was forced to do so.

Maimonides then attacks a popular belief that all actions, even such as sitting or standing, are done by the will of God. In general, this is true, but not of any given individual action. A stone thrown up in the air falls to the ground, which is in accordance with a general law of nature that God willed at creation. God, however, does not will that a certain stone at a certain time, when thrown into

the air, should fall to the ground. At creation God willed also that man should have certain characteristics, that he should walk upright, have a broad chest, have fingers on his hands and so forth, and likewise man was endowed with the characteristics of having freedom of will which he can exercise.

Maimonides then proves that certain statements in the Bible which seemingly support the theory of predestination are not of such a nature.

In conclusion, Maimonides takes up a question often asked, "Does God know in advance that a certain man will do a good or a bad deed at a certain time, or does He not know it?" If He does not know, then the principles of religion are undermined, for God is said to be all-knowing. If He does know in advance, then this clearly proves that man's actions are preordained. Maimonides answers by having recourse to metaphysics. God does not know, he says, by means of human knowledge, nor does He live by means of human life, so that it can be said He and His knowledge are distinct, or that He and His life are different, as is true of man. God is, however, the knower, the knowing and the known. He is the living, He is the life, and the giver of life. Man cannot, owing to his imperfections, comprehend what is the knowledge or life of God any more than he can grasp what God Himself is. Thus, Maimonides reconciles the two beliefs that man is free to choose, and that God is yet all-knowing.

C. SAMUEL IBN TIBBON AS A TRANSLATOR — HIS TRANSLATION OF THE *SHEMONAH PERAKIM*

Samuel ibn Tibbon,^[53] the most famous of an illustrious family of translators, by his translation of Maimonides' *Moreh Nebukim*, performed an inestimable service for Jewish philosophy. Written originally in Arabic, the *Moreh* would have remained a sealed book to the majority of Jews, had not Ibn Tibbon rendered it accessible. Had he not translated it, no doubt some one sooner or later would have accomplished that task, but it was very fortunate that one who was a contemporary of Maimonides, who had his entire confidence, and who could correspond with the author in regard to obscure passages, and receive valuable instructions from him, should have done the work. From the correspondence between Maimonides and the men of Lünel, Ibn Tibbon's birthplace, we note that Maimonides had a high regard for Samuel's ability as a translator, and honored him as a man of erudition.^[54] It seems that the scholars of Lünel wrote to Maimonides asking him to translate the *Moreh* into Hebrew, but the answer came that Ibn Tibbon was already at work on it, and that Maimonides had faith in the translator.^[55] He considered Ibn Tibbon a capable and skilled translator, and wondered at his knowledge of Arabic, although he did not live in an Arabic-speaking country.

Shortly after Ibn Tibbon translated the *Moreh*, Jehudah al-Ḥarizi, the poet, was asked by a number of scholars to do the same work. This, of course, implied that Ibn Tibbon's rendering was not satisfactory to them. They wished al-Ḥarizi to translate the *Moreh* in a simple, clear and polished style, as the version of Ibn Tibbon, being literal, was necessarily heavy. Al-Ḥarizi prefixed to his work two introductions, one containing an alphabetical list of "strange words," and the other, the contents of each chapter. It is fortunate for Ibn Tibbon that al-

Ḥarizi, too, did the same work, for a comparison shows the marked superiority and excellence of Ibn Tibbon's translation. In his *Glossary of Strange Words*, which he later prefixed to the *Moreh*, Ibn Tibbon rightfully shows the many errors and shortcomings of the translation of al-Ḥarizi, who might be a good poet, but who showed his ignorance when he attempted to deal with scientific matters.^[56]

Pococke's opinion of the two translators is interesting. He says, "The version of Ḥarizi is inferior to that of Ibn Tibbon, not because that of Tibbon is more elegant, but as regards matter it is closer to the original text."^[57] Shem Tob ibn Palquera in a letter says, "In Ibn Tibbon's translation there are only a few errors; and if the learned translator had had time he would certainly have corrected these. But in al-Ḥarizi's translation mistakes are numerous and words are often given a wrong meaning."^[58] Munk scores Ibn Tibbon's translation as a mere cast of the original and unintelligible to the ordinary Hebrew reader.^[59] Steinschneider,^[60] in commenting on this harsh criticism, shows the difficulties that faced Ibn Tibbon, and points out the value of his translation, even though it is largely a literal one. He maintains that Ibn Tibbon's work will continue to be one of the most important in the history of translations, for it laid the foundation of Hebrew philosophical style with its syntactical and terminological Arabisms.^[61] Grätz contemptuously calls Ibn Tibbon a "handicraftsman in philosophy."^[62]

While it is true that Ibn Tibbon's style is not the best, he should not be criticized too severely on this account. He consciously avoided elegance of expression for the sake of accuracy, and in order to faithfully render the original even went so far as to reproduce ambiguities. As far as possible, he consulted Maimonides on difficult passages.^[63] One must remember, too, that Ibn Tibbon was a pioneer in the art of translating from Arabic into Hebrew, that he had no patterns to go by, except the works of his father, Jehudah, that a philosophical Hebrew vocabulary did not exist, and, in consequence, even the most ordinary terms had to be coined.^[64] Ibn Tibbon was well aware of the difficulties that the reader would meet in his translation, and in order to avoid these as far as possible composed a *Glossary of Strange Words*,^[65] in which he ably explains the philosophical terms employed. He realized fully that his translation contained Arabisms,^[66] but wherever it was possible to use a Hebrew word or expression he did so. Many words and constructions in Hebrew which Ibn Tibbon used for the first time to convey the Arabic sense are now commonly accepted philosophical terms. It is unjust, moreover, to judge Ibn Tibbon by the ordinary texts of the works he has translated. Not until a carefully prepared and revised text of the *Moreh* has been published will one be able to determine accurately his ability and his shortcomings. Judging by the experience of the editor in his textual work in the *Peraḳim*, often an otherwise obscure or meaningless passage is rendered clear by evidence from manuscript, or other reliable sources.

Ibn Tibbon translated Maimonides' *Commentary on Abot*, including its introductory chapters, the *Peraḳim*, at the request of the men of Lünel,^[67] who

were presumably convinced of his capabilities by what Maimonides thought of him. All that has been said of Ibn Tibbon as a translator of the *Moreh* is true generally of his work on the *Perakim*. As in the *Moreh*, he sacrificed style for the sake of accuracy, and so, on the whole, translated with great literalness, very often word for word. Wherever he has to any marked degree departed from the original, the fact has been mentioned in the notes. As an instance of the care he exercised in turning the Arabic into Hebrew, we may point to his rendering the Arabic phrase **אללהם אלא**, meaning “unless indeed,” into the Hebrew **אלהים אם לא**, which very naturally gave rise to a misreading,^[68] or, where preserved correctly, was unintelligible save to those who were acquainted with the Arabic idiom. This shows the justice of Munk’s criticism. Wherever Ibn Tibbon was uncertain of the translation of an Arabic word, which might be rendered by one of two Hebrew words, his usual custom was to put one in the text and the other in the margin. These variants came afterwards into the text. In regard to the *Moreh*, he relied upon the advice of Maimonides as to which should be eventually used.^[69] It seems, however, that he did not consult Maimonides in reference to the *Shemonah Perakim*, and consequently at obscure points introduced glosses, noted by the expression “that is to say” (**כלומר**), or “I mean” (**ל"ל**), or “the explanation of” (**פ"י**). An instance of this is seen in Chapter II, where, after the words “as moderation” (**כזהירות**), there is added the phrase “that is to say, fear of sin” (**כלומר ירא חטא**).^[70]

At the beginning of Chapter IV, where the doctrine of the *Mean* is discussed, Ibn Tibbon has taken what in his case may be considered great liberties with the text, resulting in such a divergence from the original that Rosin^[71] was compelled to assume that the translator had before him an Arabic text differing from that of the manuscript reproduced in Pococke's *Porta Mosis*. The order of the list of virtues in Ibn Tibbon's version in no manuscript or edition is the same as that of the original, although the manuscripts and editions disagree among themselves in this regard. There are also a number of glosses, explaining in detail some of the virtues. The reason for a change in arrangement seems to be hinted at in one of the glosses, written in all likelihood by Ibn Tibbon, where there occurs the phrase, “and for this reason I have arranged them thus”

(**ולזה סדרתים כך**).^[72] The nice distinction drawn by Maimonides between the extremes of the various virtues he discusses was sufficient cause for Ibn Tibbon to have introduced explanatory glosses, as it was impossible for him to find in Hebrew the proper words for the fine Arabic terminology. The necessity of elucidation becomes apparent from the fact that a number of glosses which did not originate with Ibn Tibbon are found in some of the sources.^[73] It may, consequently, be maintained that the Arabic text we have today is substantially the same as that from which Ibn Tibbon translated,^[74] and also that, on the whole, the Hebrew of the *Perakim* follows the Arabic very closely.

It is needless to go into detail here as to the peculiarities of Ibn Tibbon's translation, as these are taken up in the notes on the text. The critical text of

the Hebrew offers in places valuable evidence on obscure readings in the Arabic, attention to which has also been drawn in the notes.^[75]

D. DESCRIPTION OF COLLATED MATERIAL — GENERAL REMARKS ON THE TEXT

A glance at the long list of manuscripts and editions of the *Peraḳim* shows the impracticability of trying to collate all the material available. The editor has, therefore, chosen a number of the most valuable sources, and has minutely compared them, being constantly guided by the Arabic. He has confined his attention as far as the Arabic is concerned to the Pococke version and that of Wolff based on it. A careful collation of Arabic texts may, however, clear up some points which are still left in doubt. The editor hopes to accomplish this task some day.

The material used in collation is as follows:

Br = manuscript of [British Museum Add. 14763](#), written A.D. 1273, containing Samuel ibn Tibbon's translation of Maimonides' *Commentary on Abot* preceded by Ibn Tibbon's introduction to and translation of the *Shemonah Peraḳim*. This is the oldest and, on the whole, the best source known to the editor. It is very carefully written, with scarcely any scribal errors. For the first six chapters its evidence is very reliable. In the seventh chapter it begins to vary from the original Arabic, and in the eighth it departs rather widely, having readings which agree substantially with those of some unreliable sources. It is possible that the first six chapters were copied from one source, the seventh and eighth from another. This manuscript is characterized throughout by an almost superfluous use of the *matres lectionis*, even in Biblical quotations. It has a few vocalized words, all of which have been recorded in the notes.

Ma = a manuscript [Maḥzor](#), Roman rite, fourteenth or fifteenth century ; in the library of the [Jewish Theological Seminary of America](#). Its readings are, on the whole, close to the Arabic, in places superior to those of Br, especially in Chapters VII and VIII, where the latter is faulty. The revised text of these two chapters is based mainly on this manuscript. There are, however, many, though unimportant, omissions, except in one instance in Chapter VIII,^[76] where all texts depart from the original, on account of which lack of evidence on the part of Ma, the editor has been obliged to reconstruct the text. It has a number of errors such as misspelled words and minor repetitions, due to carelessness of the scribe, or to a faulty source. A few vocalized words and marginal readings, chiefly of a later hand, occur.

So = *Maimonides' Commentary on Abot*, [Soncino](#) (1484–85?). It is found in the libraries of [Columbia University](#), of the [Jewish Theological Seminary of America](#), and elsewhere, and is an *incunabulum*. It is minutely described by [De Rossi](#), in *Annales Hebraeo Typographici*, Parma, p. 131. It was probably copied from the Soncino edition of the *Maḥzor*.^[77] Its chief value lies in its being in places corroboratory of Br or Ma. Only occasionally does it offer an independent reading of value.

Mi = *Mishnah* text with *Commentary of Maimonides*, Naples, 1492; printed by Joshua Soncino.^[78] This is the first edition of the *Mishnah*. The copy used by the editor is found in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. It has marginal notes offering corrections, as well as some interlinear insertions. It agrees substantially with So, its source evidently being the same, both being Soncino editions. Variants from it are recorded in the notes only when differing from those of So.

As it has been the aim of the editor to restore the text as it came from the pen of Ibn Tibbon, it has very often become necessary for him to place in the notes readings whose Hebrew is superior to that of those retained in the text.^[79] Ibn Tibbon, on the whole, translated literally, and consequently the literalism of a reading indicates conclusively that it originated with him. The more idiomatic renderings are due to copyists, who endeavored to improve the text, but who, it may be added, through their ignorance of the Arabic constructions, at times introduced errors into their manuscripts.^[80]

In order, however, to equalize the text and render it as smooth as possible, wherever one source has a reading which in minor details is more correct grammatically than that of another, though perhaps better manuscript or edition, the former reading is preferred without mention in the notes, although the looser rendering may go back to Ibn Tibbon. This is especially true as regards the agreement of suffixes and pronouns with their nouns.

Thus, **מהם**, **בהם**, etc., of So are often retained in preference to **מהן**, **בהן**, etc., of Br or Ma, although the latter are more authoritative sources.^[81]

Emendations of the text have been avoided unless supported by good authority, and always by that of the original Arabic, as, for instance, in Chapter VIII,^[82] where all the Hebrew sources are at fault, the manuscripts and editions reading, **ואמרו**, **אמתתו**, **ומתוך**, or **אמתתו ואמרו**. The Arabic **פהלכוא** points plainly to an original **ומתו**.

Glosses which can be traced to Ibn Tibbon are printed in small type. All other glosses are put in the notes.

The reader can generally tell the source on which a given part of the text is based by the absence of the sign of that source from the notes. In Chapters I to VI, for instance, the sign Br is seldom present in the notes, which indicates that the text follows that manuscript very closely. The character of the notes in this regard should, however, be taken into consideration. Thus, Chapters VII and VIII are based mainly on Ma, but that sign appears often in the notes because of minor errors and omissions in its text. Variants occurring in Mi are noted only when they differ from those in So.

E. MANUSCRIPTS — EDITIONS — TRANSLATIONS — COMMENTARIES

For a list and description of the Arabic manuscripts containing the *Thamaniaṭ Fuṣūl* (*Shemonah Peraḳim*), see *Catal. Bodl.*, 1889–1890.

The Arabic text, in Hebrew characters, with a Latin translation is contained in:—

1. *Porta Mosis sive Dissertationes Aliquot a R. Mose Maimonide, suis in varias Mishnaioth, etc.*, by [Edward Pococke](#) (Oxford, 1654), pp. 181–250.
2. *The Theological Works of the Learned Dr. Pocock*, edited by [Leonard Twells](#) (London, 1740), pp. 68-93.^[83]
3. It has also been edited by [Wolff](#), with a German translation, under the title *Thamaniaṭ Fuṣūl, Musa Maimuni's Acht Capitel. Arabisch und Deutsch mit Anmerkungen von Dr. M. Wolff* (Leipzig, 1863). Second revised edition, Leiden, 1903.

In the following are enumerated a *partial* list of manuscript works containing the whole *Abot Commentary*, and also of the manuscript *Maḥzorim* in which the *Shemonah Peraḳim* are found:^[84]—

I. WITH ABOT

[Oxford Bodleian Library](#)^[85]

- 376.3. *Massekhoth Aboth*, with *Sh'muel ibn Tibbon's* translation of M.'s commentary. Copy made by *Mord'khai ben Levi* מרדכי בן לוי at Ferrara for *R. Noah ben 'Immanuel Norzi*; finished on Sunday, 22d of Iyyar, 5237 (1477) (German rabbinical characters).
- 409.3. Fol. 285. On *Aboth*, translation of *Sh'muel Tibbon*. In M.'s commentary on *Mishnah* (German rabbinical characters).
- 714.2. Fol. 54. *Sh'muel ibn Tibbon's* preface and Heb. translation of M.'s commentary on *Aboth* and of the *Eight Chapters* (Italian rabbinical characters).
- 1254.2. Fol. 112. M.'s commentary on *Aboth* in Heb. (German rabbinical characters).
- 2282.3. Fol. 14. *Sh'muel ibn Tibbon's* translation of M.'s *Eight Chapters* and his commentary on *Aboth*, with marginal notes by a later hand (German rabbinical characters).

[British Museum Library](#)^[86]

Add. 14763. *Sam'l ibn Tibbon's* translation of M.'s Commentary on אבות, preceded by Ibn Tibbon's introduction and ח' פרקים^[87], A.D. 1273.

Add. 16390. M.'s ח' פרקים, XVIth century.

Add. 17057. The שמונה פרקים of M. and his Commentary on *Aboth* (imperfect), translation from the Arabic into Hebrew by Samuel ibn Tibbon, XVth century.

[De Rossi Library \(Parma\)](#)^[88]

- Cod. 46. 3°. R. Mosis M. *Scemone Perakim, seu octo Capita de animae facultatibus* a R. S. Tibbonide hebraice versa. Sec. XV.
- Cod. 71. *Pirke Avoth* seu Capitula patrum cum Comm. Maimonidis ejusque praefat; memb. rabb. in 4° in Sec. XV.
- Cod. 269. 2°. *Pirke Avoth* cum Commentario Maimonidis ac fusa ejus praefatione; membr. rabb. in 4°. an. 1444.
- Cod. 273. 1°. *Pirke Avoth* seu Capitula patrum cum Com. Maimon.

Cod. 327. 8°. Maimonidis Comm. in *Pirke Avoth* cum fusa praef. seu octo *Peraḳim* ex R. S. Tibbonides translatione.

Cod. 353. *P.A.* seu capitula patrum cum Comm. Maimonidis, etc. Sec. XV.

Cod. 438. 6°. M. Comm. in *P.A.* cum praef. Sam. Tibbonidis. Ad calc. vero Com. M. in *P.A.* haec reperiuntur "Finita est translatis comm. hujus tractatus ex lingua arab. in sanctam mensa *tebeth* an. 963 (chr. 1202) quem vetrit in arce Lünel sapiens philosophus, eruditus in omnia scientia, R. Sam. fil. sapientis magni R. Jeh. aben. Tib. fel. m. Granatensis hispanus."

Cod. 1161. 2°. *Pirke avoth* cum commentario M. et fusa ejus prefatione. An. 1419.

Cod. 1246. 1°. R. M. M. *Perachim*, Capitula de facultatibus animae seu fusa praefatio ad *P.A.* 2°. *P.A.* seu Capitula patrum, cum M. com. ex versione R. aben T. Sec. XIV.

Cod. 1262. R. Mosis Maim. Tredecim articuli fidei et Commentarius in *P. A.* cum fusa seu Capitibus de facult. animae. Anni 1454.

Königlichen Hof und Staatsbibliothek in Muenchen^[89]

128¹. Maimonides (פ' מִס' אַבוֹת) voran die s. g. 8 Kapp. (297¹², 327⁷), h. von Sam. Tibbon; N. 210². Sp. curs XV Jahrh.

210². Schön. ital. rabb. XIV–XV J. dann verschied; s¹⁶.

35^b, פִּירוּשׁ מִס' אַבוֹת s. N. 128 am Rand vow. f. 35, 35^b Raschi, 946 zu K. 6, etc.

297¹². 299 f. span. Curs, gross bis 62, 199b–240, 296 ff. a. 1431–9. 231 Maimonides (שְׁמוֹנֶה עָרְקִים s. n. 108) K. 3 ff. Saml. Tib.'s Vorw. f. 240^b angefangen.

327⁷. (55b–71b) פִּירוּשׁ מִשְׁנֵת אַבוֹת לְהֶרֶב הַגָּדוֹל הַמּוֹבֵק רַבֵּינוּ מֹשֶׁה בֶּן מִיִּימוֹן זצ"ל enthält nur das Vorw. des Uebersetzers S. ibn Tib. und die שְׁמוֹנֶה עָרְקִים (so zuletzt, vgl. 128¹. Zeile 3, 4 im Akrost. des Abschreibes lautet:

אֲמוּנִים הֵם וְבֶן מִיִּימוֹן לְאוֹמֵן
לְמֹשֶׁה נִתְּנוּ כֹּלָם לְמִנָּה, בְּנֵי תִרְצָה וְהַתְּחִבֵּר
אֵלֵיהֶם, וְתֵן חֵלֶק לְשִׁבְעָה גַם לְשְׁמוֹנֶה.

401⁷. (Von der Hand des Cod. 400 XV–XVI J.) 269. Ms' acht Kapitel. Anf und Mitte def; s. Cod. 128 zuletzt Minuskel 1498.

Königlichen Bibliothek (Berlin)^[90]

60 (Ms. Or. Qu. 498.) Kleine italien. Cursiv, gegen Ende XV (?) Jahrh. Besitzer : Benj. Pesaro. (מִסְכַּת אַבוֹת) der talmud. Tractat *Aboth*, Text in grosserer Schrift & punktirt mit dem Commentar des Maimonides dessen Einleitung, bekannt als שְׁמוֹנֶה עָרְקִים (8 Kapitel) vorangeht.

75² (Ms. Or. Oct. 138.) Pergament, 303 Seiten, grosse schöne span. rabb. Hand. etwa XIV Jahrh. S. 86 פִּירוּשׁ לְרַמְבַּ"ם ז"ל מִסְכַּת אַבוֹת (zuletzt) Commentar des Mose Maimonides zum Tractat *Aboṭ* (ohne Text, vgl. Cod. 567, Fol. 498 Qu¹). Der erste Abschreiber fand die Vorrede des Uebersetzers Sam'l ibn Tibbon erst nädtraglich und schrieb sie S. 293–303, etc.

II. MAḤZORIM

British Museum

Harley 5686. **מחזור** for the whole year, Roman rite. *Aboth* with M.'s commentary and his *Eight Chapters* in Sam'l ibn Tibbon's transl. XVth century.

Add. 16577. **מחזור** Roman rite, includes *Aboth* with *Eight Chapters* and commentary of M. in Hebrew translation of Samuel ibn Tibbon. XVth century.

Add. 27070. Part 1 of a **מחזור**, Roman rite, including *Aboth* with the *Eight Chapters* and Commentary of M. in Samuel ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation. XVth century.

Add. 19944-19945. **מחזור**, Roman rite, including *Aboth* with the *Eight Chapters* and Commentary of M. in the Hebrew translation of Samuel ibn Tibbon. A.D. 1441.

De Rossi Library

Cod. 63. *Maḥzor* . . . item *Pirke Aboth* cum com. Maimonidis membr. rabb. in 4° min. Sec. XV. M.'s com. in *Pirke Avoth* quem in *Machazorim* passim, addi supra animadvertimus, est ex Hebr. versione R. Samuelis Aben Tibbon. Occurrunt etiam ejusdem M. octo Perakim seu capita.

Cod. 260. *Maḥzor* . . . Accedunt *Pirke Avoth* seu Capitula patrum cum com. M. . . . memb. rabb. fol. min. sec. XV. M. com. *Pirke Av.* et epistola de resurrectione sunt ex versione R. Samuelis Aben Tib.; ac prior ille praefixaim, habet fucam auctonus praefationem, seu Capitula de facultati bus animae.

Cod. 378. *Maḥzor* seu *Purim* et *Pesach* cum libro Esther, etc. — et. M. Com. P. A. ex versione S. Aben T. memb. rabb. Mutilus in 4° : maj. sec. XIII. Vetustus codex singularibus, instructus lectionibus, etc.

Cod. 403. *Maḥzor* hisp. cum Sect. biblicia ac Psal. occur. . . . P. A. cum com. M. Minhag seu Treves, memb. rabbin. in 8° an. 1470.

Cod. 420. *Maḥzor* ital.; cum Ruth, etc. P. A. cum Com. M. sec. XV.

Cod. 740. *Maḥzor* ital. . . . *Pirke Avoth* cum comm. Maimonidis, membr. rabb. fol. min. vel. 4° Maj. Sec. XV.

Cod. 767. *Maḥzor* ital. . . . P. A. cum comm. M. membr. rabb. in fol. an 1463.

Cod. 770. P. A. cum M. Comment. hebr. verso a R. S. aben Tib. Sec. XIV.

Cod. 802. *Maḥzor* italicum . . . P. A. cum com. M. ei *Perachim* seu VIII capitibus. Sec. XV.

Cod. 814. *Maḥzor* ritus italici . . . P. A. . . . cum comm. M. ej. ° *Perachim* membr. ital. 1489.

Cod. 955. *Maḥzor* hisp. . . . P. A. cum com. M.; membram hisp. fol. sec. XIV vel XV.

Cod. 959. *Maḥzor* romanum ° vel italicum . . . P. A. cum com. M. ac Jarchii ej. M. *Perachim* an. 1400.

NOTE. — Maimonides com. in P. A. qui est consueta Sam. Tibbonidis versione praemittitur interpretis et auctoris altera fusior de animae facultatibus quam *scemone perachim* seu octo capitula inscripsit.

Cod. 1212. *Machazor* italicum . . . P. A. cum com. M. ac fusa ejus praef. seu Octo Capitibus. Sec. XV.

Jewish Theological Seminary (New York)

Maḥzor. Roman rite, fourteenth or fifteenth century.^[91]

EDITIONS OF THE *SHEMONAH PERAKIM*

The *Perakim* are found in all editions of the *Mishnah* and *Talmud* which contain the *Commentary* of Maimonides.^[92] The text of the *Perakim* contained

in the first edition of the *Mishnah* agrees substantially with that found in the Commentary on *Abot* which has been collated by the editor, and designated by So. Both were printed by Soncino.^[93] The *Peraḳim* in the first edition of the *Talmud* are practically in accord with these.

The *Commentary on Abot* with the *Peraḳim* was incorporated into the Italian ritual (1484) and also into the Greek ritual (since 1520).^[94] They may also be found in the *Maḥzorim* of the Soncino Brothers, Soncino, 1485 (finished, Casal Maggiore, 1486),^[95] and Rimini, 1521, and in the Bologna edition of the *Maḥzor*, 1540–1541.^[96]

EDITIONS OF ABOT WITH THE SHEMONAH PERAḲIM

1. *Abot* with commentary of Maimonides, including the *Shemonah Peraḳim*, Soncino, 1484; described on page 25.
2. פרקי אבות עם פי' הרמבם ופי' דון יצחק אברבנאל בן דון יהודה וויניציאה. 1545, אברבנאל וקרא בשם המאמר הזה נחלת אבות 4°. ^[97] ש"ה.
3. פרקי אבות, with commentary of Maimonides, London, 5532 (1772).^[97] 12°.

SEPARATE EDITIONS

1. Hurwitz, Abraham.^[98] . . . ספר חסד אברהם שאזן מ' אברהם בר . . . שבתי הורוויץ על שמונה פרקים Lublin, Kalonymos ben Mordechai Jafe und sein Sohn Chojyim. 1574.
2. אינס דייטש איבערזעצט . . . ש"פ.^[99] Vienna, 1798. 8°.
3. ספר הין צדק ותיקון המדות. Lichtenstein (Abraham ben Eliezer). Wilna, מיוסד על ח" פרקי רבינו משה בר מיימון זצוק"ל 1799. 4°. (Contains only chapters I–V.) (תקנט.)
4. שמונה פרקים להר"מבם מיט דער דייטשען איבערסעצונג נייע גאנץ פערבעסערטע אוסגאבע. Basel, 1804. Printed by Wilhelm Haas.^[100]
5. חלקת מחקק כולל שמונה פרקים . . . Salomon, Gotthold.^[101] לר"מב"ם איבערזעצט אונד מיט טהעאלאגיש פהילאזאפישן אנמערקונגן פערזעהן מאת שלמה זלמן בכה"רר ליפמן לבית הלוי. Dessau, Moses Philippsohn, 1809. 8°. With vowels.
6. Beer, Michal. שמונה פרקים לרמב"ם. *Le huit Chapitres de Maïmonide*, etc., trad. en franc. 8°. Paris, 1811.

7. *Acht Abschnitte*^[102] ... *aus dem Arabischen*. Braunschweig, 1824. 8°.
8. Falkenheim, S. *Die Ethik des Maimonides oder Schemoneh Perakim; deutsch bearbeit.* Königsberg, 1832. 8°.
9. שמונה פרקים לרמב"ם. *De Acht Hoofdstukken van Maimonides. Bevattende zijne Zielkundige Verhandeling. Het Hebreeuwsch op nieuw nagezien en in het Nederduitsch vertaald.*^[103] Groningen, S. J. Oppenheim, 1845.
10. Slucki, David. חכמת ישראל in שמונה פרקים להרמב"ם. Contains also a biography of Samuel Ibn Tibbon and notes. Warsaw, 1863.
11. Wolf, Michal. שמונה פרקים לרמב"ם נעתק מחדש ללשון אשכנז והובא לדפוס מאת מיכל וואלף ונוסף עליו הערות חדשות לעם ישנות. Lemberg, 1876 (Follows ed. Dessau, 1809). With vowels, but unreliable.

COMMENTARIES, ANNOTATED EDITIONS, AND TRANSLATIONS

The commentaries on the *Perakim* are found in some of the above-mentioned editions. They are the ספר חסד אברהם by Hurwitz, which is found in all editions of the Talmud which contain Maimonides' commentary,^[104] and that of Lichtenstein in his ספר הין צדק.

The annotated editions are those of Vienna, 1798; Dessau, 1809; Groningen, 1845; Warsaw, 1863; and Lemberg, 1876.

The popularity of the *Perakim* is evident from the fact that they have been translated many times into various languages. The following is a list of the translations:—

a. *Latin*.—The *Perakim* in Latin^[105] are found in:

(1) Pococke's *Porta Mosis*, from the Arabic. (2) The translation of the *Mishnah*, with the commentaries of Maimonides and Bartinora, by Surenhusius.^[106] (3) The unedited translation of Maimonides' *Commentary on Abot*, by Jacob Mantinus.^[107] (4) The translation of Maimonides' *Commentary on Abot*, by C. C. Uythage^[108].

b. *German*.—In the editions of (1) Vienna, 1798; (2) Haas, Basel, 1804; (3) Salomon, Dessau, 1809; (4) Wolff, Leipzig, 1863 and Leiden, 1903, from the Arabic; (5) Wolf, Lemberg, 1876; (6) by M. Rawicz, in *Kommentar des Maimonides zu den Sprüchen der Vater, ins Deutsche übertragen*, 1910, pp. 1-47. Portions of chapters I and VIII are translated by Beer, in *R. Moses ben Maimon*.

c. *French*.—Beer, Paris, 1811; Jules Wolff,^[109] Paris, 1912.

d. *Dutch*. Groningen, 1845.

e. *English*.—Hebrew Review, edited by Morris J. Raphall, London, Volumes I and II (1834-1835).^[110]

1. ↑ Moses Maimonides (in Arabic, *Ibū 'Imrān Mūsā ibn Maimūn ibn 'Obaid Allah*) was born at Cordova, March 30, 1135; in 1165 he accompanied his father to Africa and then to Palestine; in 1166 he repaired to Egypt, and settled in Fustât, near Cairo; he died Dec. 13, 1204. On the pronunciation of מַיְמוֹן, see Geiger, *Nachgelassene Schriften* (1876), III, *Moses ben Maimon*, p. 70, note 1; Grätz, VI³, p. 262, n. 1; *Catal. Bodl.*, 1861 ff.; *Arab. Lit.*, 199 ff. On his life and works, see *Catal. Bodl.*, 1861 ff.; Grätz, VI³, pp. 261–326; also Yellin and Abrahams, *Maimonides* (Philadelphia, 1903); I. Broydé, *JE*, IX, art., *Moses ben Maimon*; etc.
2. ↑ On the opposition to Maimonides' works, see *Jew. Lit.*, pp. 85–92.
3. ↑ In Kerem Hemed, III, p. 67.
4. ↑ *Leben und Wirken des Rabbi Moses ben Maimon* (Prague, 1834), pp. 6, 15, 16.
5. ↑ *Moses ben Maimon*, p. 57; p. 83, n. 33.
6. ↑ *Ethik*, p. 30, "Von Hause aus sei der Talmud allein Gegenstand seines Studiums gewesen."
7. ↑ I. Friedlaender, *Moses Maimonides*, in *New Era Illustrated Magazine*, January, 1905, Reprint (New York, 1905), pp. 34–35; Bernard Ziemlich, *Plan und Anlage des Mischne Torah*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, p. 259; see also M. Friedländer, *Guide*, Introd., pp. xix, xxi.
8. ↑ Munk, *Guide*, Vol. I, Preface, p. 1; Beer, *Rabbi Moses ben Maimon*, pp. 4 and 12; *Arab. Lit.*, pp. 203–204; Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 30; Grätz, VI³, pp. 275, 307; Wolff, *Acht Capitel*, Introd., p. ix; M. Friedländer, *Guide*, Introd., p. xxiv.
9. ↑ Joel, *Verhältniss Alb. d. Gr. zu Moses Maimonides* (Breslau, 1863); *Etwas über den Einfluss der jüdischen Philosophie auf die christliche Scholastik* (*Frankel's Monatsschr.*, IX, pp. 205–217); Jaraczewski, *Die Ethik des M.*, etc., in *ZPhKr.*, XLVI, pp. 5–24; Guttman, *Das Verhältniss des Thomas v. Aquino zur jüd. Literatur* (Göttingen, 1891); *Die Scholastik des 13 Jahrh. in ihren Beziehungen zur jüd. Litteratur* (Breslau, 1902); D. Kaufmann, *Der Führer Maimuni's in der Weltlitteratur*, *AGPh.*, XI, p. 335 ff.; Richter, *Geschichte der christlichen Philosophie*, Vol. I, p. 610 ff.; Ueberweg, *Hist. of Phil.* (1885), Vol. I, p. 428; Weber, *Hist. of Phil.* (1895), p. 210, n. 2; Jacob Guttman, *Der Einfluss der maimonidischen Philosophie auf das christliche Abendland*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, pp. 135–230; Philip Bloch, *Charakteristik und Inhaltsangabe des Moreh Nebuchim*, *ib.*, p. 41, n. 1.
10. ↑ Munk, *Mélanges*, p. 323; *HUb.*, p. 415; M. Guttman, *Das religionsphil. System der Mutakallimun nach d. Berichte Maimon* (Leipzig, 1885); D. Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 339–340.
11. ↑ The Arabic title is סֵפֶר הַמְּאֹרֶת כְּתָאב אֶלְסֵרְאָג (Book of Illumination), which, however, as Steinschneider (*Arab. Lit.*, p. 200) and Geiger (*Moses ben Maimon*, p. 82, n. 31) maintain, hardly originated with Maimonides.
12. ↑ M. wrote all of his works, with the exception of the *Mishneh Torah* and a number of letters, in Arabic, but with Hebrew characters, as Arabic was the language used by the Jews living under Islam. On his objection to having the *Moreh* copied in other than Hebrew characters, see Munk, *Notice sur Joseph ben Jehouda* (Paris, 1842), p. 27, n. 1. On the Arabic language of Maimonides and his style, see I. Friedlaender, *Sprachegebrauch des Maimonides* (Frankfurt a. M., 1902), Introduction; and by the same author, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, the articles, *Die arabische Sprache des*

Maimonides, pp. 421–428, and *Der Stil des Maimonides*, pp. 429–438; also his short account in *Selections from the Arabic Writings of Maimonides* (Semitic Study Series, No. XII, edited by Gottheil and Jastrow, Leiden, 1909), Introd., pp. xiv–xxiii.

13. ↑ See *infra*, p. 10, n. 1.
14. ↑ Geiger, *Moses ben Maimon*, p. 59; Harkavy, in Hebrew ed. of Grätz, IV, *Appendix*, p. 52.
15. ↑ Grätz, VI³, pp. 266 and 274.
16. ↑ In the *Moreh*, which appeared at least twenty-five years after the *Com. on the Mishnah*, there are twelve or more references to the latter, four of which are to the *Perakim*. See *Moreh*, I, 39; III, 35 (twice), 48. Scheyer, in *Das psychologische System des Maimonides* (Frankfurt a. M., 1845), which he designated as an introduction to the *Moreh*, draws largely from the *Perakim*, and constantly refers to them in the notes. See especially Chaps. I, II, and IV. Munk, in the notes in his *Guide*, refers a number of times to the *Mish. Com.*, many of these being to the *Perakim*. In Vol. I, p. 210, n. 1, he quotes at length from *Perakim* I on the rational faculty, and on p. 232, n. 1, from *Perakim* VIII on the attributes of God. Other references are found in Vol. I, p. 125, n. 2, to *Perakim* II (the classification of the virtues); p. 286, n. 3, to *Perakim* VIII (miracles); p. 355, n. 1, to *Perakim* I (the faculties); p. 400, n. 2, to *Perakim* I (the theory of imagination of the *Mutakallimun*) ; etc.
17. ↑ Ziemlich, *Plan und Anlage des Mischne Thora*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, p. 305, "Die im M. K. festgestellten Resultate hat er zum grossen Teile in den M. T. aufgenommen." See also authorities cited by Ziemlich. On the contradictions of the *Mishnah Commentary* and the *Mishneh Torah*, see Derenbourg, in Zunz's *Jubelschrift* (Berlin, 1884), *Die Uebersetzungen des Mischnah Commentars des Maimonides*.
18. ↑ For a detailed account of the translators and translations of the *Commentary on the Mishnah*, see *HUb.*, pp. 923–926; *Arab. Lit.*, pp. 201–202.
19. ↑ To M., Aristotle was the "chief of philosophers." Cf. Munk, *Guide*, I, Chap. V, p. 46, and n. 1. See also *Moreh*, II, 17, 19, 24. He considered him to be almost on a plane with the prophets. See M.'s *Letter to Ibn Tibbon*, *Kobez* II. M. refers to the *Nichomachean Ethics* in *Moreh*, II, 36, and in III, 49 (twice). On his dependence upon *Eth. Nic.*, see Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 6, et al. M., however, does not slavishly follow Aristotle, and speaks disparagingly of those "who believe that they are philosophers," but who consider "it wrong to differ from Aristotle, or to think that he was ignorant or mistaken in anything" (*Moreh*, II, 15). In regard to Aristotle's theory of creation, he speaks of the absurdities implied in it (*ib.*, II, 18, end). See A. Wolf in *Aspects of the Hebrew Genius*, London, 1910, pp. 141–142. On M.'s departure in the *Perakim* from the Aristotelian system, see Jaraczewski, *ZPhKr.*, XLVI, pp. 12–13, 14–15, and 16. On M.'s dependence upon Aristotle, see M. Joel, *Die Religions-philosophie des Mose ben Maimon* (Breslau, 1859); Scheyer, *Das psychol. System des Maimonides*; Rosin, *Ethik*; Wolff, *Acht Capitel*; Yellin and Abrahams, *Maimonides*; Cohen, *Charakteristik der Ethik des Maimunis*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, all *en passim*; and Ludwig Stein in *JE*, II, pp. 47, 48–49.
20. ↑ See pp. 25 and 31.
21. ↑ See pp. 24–25, 29–30, and 31.
22. ↑ See pp. 31 and 32.
23. ↑ See pp. 32 and 33.
24. ↑ See p. 27.
25. ↑ See *Catal. Bodl.*, 1853; *Arab. Lit.*, p. 200 ff., and Grätz, VI³, p. 273 ff.

26. ↑ Generally, but incorrectly, named **הקדמה לסדר זרעים**, as in Pococke, *Porta Mosis*, which contains the Arabic text with Latin translation.
27. ↑ Arabic with Latin translation in *Porta Mosis*. Arabic with Hebrew translation, J. Holzer, *Zur Geschichte der Dogmenlehre in der jüd. Religionsphilosophie des Mittelalters. Mose Maimuni's Einleitung zu Chelek* (Berlin, 1901); English translation by J. Abelson, *JQR*, vol. XXIX, p. 28 ff. The Arabic text with notes has been recently edited by I. Friedlaender in *Selections from the Arabic Writings of Maimonides*, pp. 1–39.
28. ↑ See *Catal. Bodl.*, 1890–91.
29. ↑ *Arab. Lit.*, p. 273, n. 1. Arabic text by Baneth, Berlin, 1905; Ger. translation in Rawicz, *Commentar des M. zu den Sprüchen der Väter* (1910).
30. ↑ Written by M. to serve as an introduction to the *Mishneh Torah*; it contains the enumeration and classification of the 613 precepts of the Law. See Grätz, VI³, p. 291. For a part of the Arabic text with the Hebrew translation of Shelomoh ben Joseph ibn Ayyub, and German translation with notes, see M. Peritz, *Das Buch der Gesetze*, Theil I (Breslau, 1881); the Arabic text was published by Moïse Bloch, Paris, 1888. See *HUb.*, p. 926; *Jew. Lit.*, p. 71; and in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, articles by Moritz Peritz, *Das Buch der Gesetze, nach seiner Anlage und seinem Inhalte untersucht*, and by Ferdinand Rosenthal, *Die Kritik des Maimonidischen "Buches der Gesetze" durch Nachmanides*.
31. ↑ *Catal. Bodl.*, 1869 ff.; Grätz, VI³, p. 285 ff.; Ziemlich, *Plan und Anlage des Mischne Thora*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, pp. 248–318.
32. ↑ *Ib.*, pp. 273, 278, 281–283.
33. ↑ For literature, description, and contents of the *Moreh*, see *HUb.*, pp. 414–434; Grätz, VI³, p. 306 ff.; M. Friedländer, *Guide*, Introd.; Bloch, *Charakteristik und Inhaltsangabe des Moreh Nebuchim*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, pp. 1–52.
34. ↑ *HUb.*, pp. 434–436. Hebrew by Moses ibn Tibbon in many editions.
35. ↑ *HUb.*, pp. 436–437.
36. ↑ Consists of Arabic excerpts from the writings of Galen and other physicians. Hebrew by Natan ha-Meati, edited in Lemberg, 1800, 1834–35, and in Wilna, 1888. See *Jew. Lit.*, p. 195; *HUb.*, pp. 765–767; *Arab. Lit.*, pp. 214–215; Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 32, n. 6; Pagel, *Maimuni als medizinischer Schriftsteller*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, pp. 232–238.
37. ↑ Chapter XIV.
38. ↑ In the introduction to Sanhedrin, Chap. X (*Perek Helek*), M. speaks of **החלק המעשי מן הפילוסופיא**.
39. ↑ Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 37, "Die Ethik ist also nach M. die Lehre von den Tugenden und den guten Handlungen."
40. ↑ **וזהם שמונה פרקים**. See Hebrew text, p. 7.
41. ↑ **פתיחת אבות**: Ar. **צדר אבות**. See p. 3, n. 4, on the Arabic title of the *Com. on the Mishneh* (**סראג**), for which M. is probably also not responsible.
42. ↑ In his *Preface* to the translation of the *Commentary on Abot*, I. T. refers to them as **והפרקים אשר הקדים הרב וכ**. See p. 22, n. 1.
43. ↑ On the appropriateness of **מורה נבוכים** as a translation of the Arabic title *Dalālat al Hā'irīn* (**דלאלה אלהאירין**), see *HUb.*, p. 418. Maimonides himself was of the opinion that **הוראת הנבוכים** would be preferable. See

also Kaufmann, *Attrib.*, p. 363, and n. 1; and especially Munk, *Guide, Note sur le Titre de cet Ouvrage*, at beginning of Vol. I; and II, pp. 379–380.

44. ↑ According to a postscript to the *Commentary on the Mishnah* written by Maimonides, he began to work on it at the age of twenty-three (1158), and finished it at the age of thirty, in the year 1479 of the Seleucid era, which is the year 1168, when, however, Maimonides was thirty-three years of age and not thirty. Maimonides could not have made a mistake in his own age. Geiger explains the difficulty by stating that Maimonides must have written the postscript while he was in the Maghreb in 1165, when the *Commentary* was practically finished. The words **לשטרות וע' במצרים** and **שהיא שנת ט'** were, however, added three years later after a revision had been made. The words **בן שלשים שנה** through an oversight were allowed to remain. See Geiger, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, III, p. 87, end of note 41; and Grätz, VI³, p. 273, n. 3. Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 30, n. 3, says the postscript should read **בן שלשים ושלוש**. Cf. Jaraczewski, *ZPhKr.*, XLVI, p. 23, n. 3.
45. ↑ See page 28 for description of the manuscript and the note referred to. Jaraczewski (*Ibid.*, p. 22) states that I. T. translated after the death of M.
46. ↑ Scheyer, *Psychol. Syst. d. Maim.*, p. 9, n. 1, says, "Diese Schrift des M. ist eine ethisch-psychologische Abhandlung." Steinschneider describes the *Perakim* as "the celebrated eight chapters on psychology" (*Jew. Lit.*, p. 102). Friedländer, *Guide* (1904), Introd., p. xx, styles them "a separate psychological treatise." The Dutch translation, 1845 (see *infra*, p. 32), has a sub-title, *Maimonides Psychologie*. See also Yellin and Abrahams, *Maimonides*, p. 77.
47. ↑ Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 33, describes the *Perakim* in general as an "Abriss der allgemeinen Ethik," and Chapters I and II as "die psychologische Grundlage der Ethik im Allgemeinen und Besonderen." Wolff, *Acht Capitel*, Introd., p. xii, calls them a "System der Ethik."
48. ↑ See *infra*, Chapter I, p. 45; Chapter V, p. 74; Chapter VII, p. 83; Chapter VIII, p. 100.
49. ↑ See Grätz, VI³, p. 275.
50. ↑ On the title of Chapter II, see Hebrew text, p. 14, n. 1.
51. ↑ On title, see Hebrew text, p. 35, n. 1.
52. ↑ See *infra*, chapter VII, p. 79, notes 3 and 4.
53. ↑ Born 1160, died 1230. See Renan-Neubauer, *Les Rabbins Français*, p. 573 ff.; also *Les Ecrivains Français*; Grätz, VI³, 205; Winter and Wünsche, *Die Jud. Litteratur*, II, 330, 385; M. Schloessinger, in *JE.*, vol. VI, p. 548; Geiger, *Judaism and its History* (New York, 1911), pp. 375–376.
54. ↑ On Maimonides' correspondence with the men of Lünel, see *HUb.*, pp. 415–416.
55. ↑ Grätz, VI³, p. 324; *HUb.*, p. 417.
56. ↑ Cf. *HUb.*, p. 420 ff.; Kaufmann, *Der Führer Maimuni's in der Weltliteratur*, AGPh., XI, p. 346 ff. See especially Kaufmann, *Attrib.*, p. 493, n. 182, where are mentioned a number of those who find fault with al-Ḥarizi's translation and introductions. Abraham ben Maimon says of him: **שהיתה העתקתו משובשת ומקולקלת** (Kobez, III, f. 16^b coll.). Ibn Tibbon in his own *Glossary of Strange Words* especially condemns that of al-Ḥarizi with the words: **ואני לא מצד שנאה וקנאה אומר באמת שהשער ההוא כלו מלא מכשולים כאשר השער אשר לפניו רובו הבלים וקצת**

כזבים טעיות ומכשולים לפני סכלים ומשכילים. See also Friedländer, *Guide*, 1904, Introd., p. xxxii.

57. ↑ Preface to *Porta Mosis*, "Versis (Charisii) illi ab Aben Tibbon factae postposita, fuit, non quod ilia Tibbonidae elegantior, sed materiae congruentior fuerit," etc.
58. ↑ *HUb.*, p. 432; *JE.*, art., *Ibn Tibbon*.
59. ↑ Munk, *Guide*, I, Preface, p. ii, "La version d'Ibn-Tibbon, qu'on peut appeler un véritable 'calque' de l'originale arabe, ne peut être bien comprise que par celui qui possède à la fois la connaissance de l'arabe et celle de l'hébreu rabbinique et qui a acquis des notions suffisantes de la philosophie musulmane et de sa terminologie."
60. ↑ *HUb.*, pp. 419, 423.
61. ↑ *Arab. Lit.*, p. 205.
62. ↑ Grätz (Eng. ed.), III, p. 566.
63. ↑ See his Preface to the *Moreh*, also Friedländer, *Guide*, Introd., p. xxviii.
64. ↑ He had as guides his father's translations and various Arabic books which he possessed. See his *Preface* to the *Moreh*, also *HUb.*, p. 416.
65. ↑ On I.T.'s *Glossary* (פירוש מן מלות זרות), see *HUb.*, p. 421 ff.
66. ↑ On Arabisms of I.T., see his *Preface* to the *Moreh*; also *HUb.*, pp. 419–420.
67. ↑ See I.T.'s *Preface* to his translation of the *Commentary on Abot*: כאשר ראו חכמי לוניל עיר מולדתי פירוש זאת המסכתא והפרקים עניניה בקשו ממני [בבאור, אשר הקדים הרב בחבור להעתיקו להם כאשר עשו במאמר מורה נבוכים. See *Preface* to *Porta Mosis*, p. 4, and *Peraḳim*, ed. Slutski, p. 3.
68. ↑ See Hebrew text, c. V, p. 32, n. 28.
69. ↑ See I.T.'s *Preface to the Moreh*.
70. ↑ See Hebrew text, c. II, p. 16, n. 1.
71. ↑ Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 31, n. 2.
72. ↑ 2 See Hebrew text, c. IV, p. 21, line 8.
73. ↑ See Hebrew text, c. IV, p. 19, notes 16 and 17.
74. ↑ The translators of the *Mishnah Commentary* seem to have had only one copy from which they all translated. Geiger, *Moses ben Maimon*, p. 83, n. 43.
75. ↑ See Hebrew text, c. VIII, p. 42, n. 14; p. 43, n. 7; p. 47, n. 6; p. 53, n. 1.
76. ↑ See Hebrew text, p. 51, n. 10.
77. ↑ See *Catalogo di Opere Ebraiche Greche Latine ed Italiane stampate dai Celebri Tipografi Soncini ne' Secoli XV e XVI, Compilato da Gaetano Zaccaria Antonucci*, p. 113; Steinschneider, *Supplementum Catalogi libr. hebr. in Biblioth. Bodleiana*, in *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* (Leipzig, 1894), Vol. XI, p. 486, and *JE.*, vol. VI, p. 578, art. *Incunabula*.
78. ↑ See Antonucci, *Catalogo*, etc., pp. 53–54.
79. ↑ See, for instance, Hebrew text, c. I, p. 9, n. 1.
80. ↑ See Hebrew text, c. V, p. 32, n. 28.
81. ↑ I.T. was conscious of such errors in his translations. See his *Preface to the Moreh*, in which he refers to his father's (Jehudah's) *Preface* to his translation of Bahya ibn Pakuda's *הזויות הלבבות*, where Jehudah dwells upon the difficulties in translating from Arabic into Hebrew. Cf. *HUb.*, p. 374.
82. ↑ See Hebrew text, p. 54, n. 37.

83. ↑ The *Porta Mosis* also contains the other introductions found in Maimonides' *Commentary on the Mishnah*, namely, the *Introduction to the Mishnah* (erroneously called *in Seder Zeraim praefatio*), the introduction to *Perek Helek*, to *Kodoshim*, to *Tohoroth*, and to *M'naḥoth*. Twells, in his account of the life and writings of Pococke, says (p. 44) that the Mss. Pococke made use of "were very good and some of them, he imagined, the very originals written by the author's (M.'s) own hand." Jaraczewski (*ZPhKr.*, XLVI, p. 22) states that Pococke used an Oxford Ms. The title page of the *Porta Mosis* has the imprint of *H. Hall Academiae Typographus*, 1655, but the title page of the *Appendix* is dated 1654.
84. ↑ See, also, *Catalogues des Manuscrits Hébreux et Samaritains de la Bibliothèque Impériale* (Paris, 1866), nos. 332¹, 334¹, 605, 609, 617, 674³, 750², and 1191¹⁰, and catalogues of other libraries.
85. ↑ Neubauer, *Catalogue*.
86. ↑ Margoliouth, *Hebrew and Samaritan Mss.*, London, 1893.
87. ↑ See *supra*, p. 24.
88. ↑ *Mss. Codices Hebraici*, Parma, 1803.
89. ↑ Steinschneider, *Die Heb. Handschriften*, Munich, 1875.
90. ↑ Steinschneider, *Verzeichniss der Heb. Handschriften*, Berlin, 1878.
91. ↑ See *supra*, pp. 24–25.
92. ↑ See Fürst, *Bibliotheca Judaica*, vol. II, p. 309.
93. ↑ See *supra*, p. 25.
94. ↑ *HUb.*, pp. 437–438. *Catal. Bodl.*, 1890, 2483.
95. ↑ See Antonucci, *Catalogo*, etc., p. 115. *HUb.*, p. 438, n. 477.
96. ↑ Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 31, n. 2.
97. ↑ [Jump up to:97.0 97.1](#) See *Catalogue of the Cohen Library*, Baltimore, Md.
98. ↑ Other editions of the same are Lublin, 1616; *ib.*, 1622; Krakau, 1577; *ib.*, 1602. See Fürst, *loc. cit.* Hurwitz was a pupil of R. Moses Isserles; see *Monatsch. für Gesch. und Wissenschaft des Judenthum* (1903), vol. XI, p. 163, n. 1.
99. ↑ According to the preface, it follows a Latin text, presumably that of Pococke, but its text is hardly different from that of the other editions.
100. ↑ Haas was a member of the *Acad. der mech. Künste* in Berlin.
101. ↑ *HUb.*, p. 438. Salomon was a teacher at the *Freischule* in Dessau; Beer, *Rabbi Moses ben Maimon*, p. 72.
102. ↑ *Catalogue of Hebrew Books in the British Museum*, p. 587.
103. ↑ A copy is found in the Columbia University Library (N.Y.).
104. ↑ See Fürst, *loc. cit.*
105. ↑ Jaraczewski (*ZPhKr.*, XL VI, p. 23) refers to a Latin translation which appeared in Bologna in 1520.
106. ↑ *Mishnah sive totius Hebraeorum juris, rituum, antiquitatum, ac legum oralium systema cum Maimonidis et Bartenorae commentariis integris. Accedunt variorum auctorum notae Latinate donavit G. Surenhusius. Amsterdaedami*, 1698-1703.
107. ↑ Jak. Mantino (A. in Tortosa) *Octo Capita R. Mosis Maimonidis ... in versione latina*, etc. Bologna, 1526. 4°. See Fürst, *loc. cit.*; *HUb.*, p. 438.
108. ↑ Cnej. Cornel. Uythage (in Leyden), *Explicatio R. Mosis Maimonidis ... complectens octo capita*, etc., Leyden, 1683. 8°. *HUb.*, p. 438.
109. ↑ See *Jew. Chronicle* (London), No. 2255, p. 30.
110. ↑ Incomplete and very free. Chapter IV is translated by Coupland in *Thoughts and Aspirations of the Ages*, London, 1895, pp. 206 ff.

FOREWORD

THE author, Rabbi Moses (may God preserve him!) said:^[1] We have already explained in the introduction to this work (i. e. the *Commentary on the Mishnah*) the reason the author of the *Mishnah* had for putting this treatise (*Abot*) in this Order (*Nezikin*)^[2]. We have also mentioned the great benefit that is to be derived from this treatise, and have promised many times in preceding passages to discuss certain important points at some length in commenting upon it. For, although the contents of the treatise seem clear and easy to understand, yet to carry out all that it contains is not a simple matter for everybody. Moreover, not all of its contents is intelligible without ample comment, withal that it leads to great perfection and true happiness. For these reasons, I have deemed it advisable here to go into a more lengthy discussion. Besides, our Rabbis of blessed memory have said, "He who wishes to be saintly, let him practise the teachings of *Abot*"^[3]. Now, there is nothing that ranks so high with us as saintliness, unless it be prophecy, and it is saintliness that paves the way to prophecy; as our Rabbis of blessed memory said, "Saintliness leads to holy inspiration."^[4] Thus, their words make it clear that the putting into practice of the teachings of this tractate leads one to prophecy. I shall later expound the truth of this assertion, because upon it depends a number of ethical principles.

Further, I deem it fit to preface the commentary on the respective *Halakot*^[5] proper by some useful chapters, from which the reader may learn certain basic principles which may later serve as a key to what I am going to say in the commentary. Know, however, that the ideas presented in these chapters and in the following commentary are not of my own invention; neither did I think out the explanations contained therein,^[6] but I have gleaned them from the words of the wise occurring in the *Midrashim*, in the *Talmud*, and in other of their works, as well as from the words of the philosophers, ancient and recent, and also from the works of various authors,^[7] as one should accept the truth from whatever source it proceeds.^[8] Sometimes, I may give a statement in full, word for word in the author's own language, but there is no harm in this, and it is not done with the intention of glorifying myself by presenting as my own something that was said by others before me, since I have just confessed (my indebtedness to others), even though I do not say "so and so said", which would necessitate useless prolixity. Sometimes, too, the mentioning of the name of the authority drawn upon might lead one who lacks insight to believe that the statement quoted is faulty, and wrong in itself, because he does not understand it. Therefore, I prefer not to mention the authority, for my intention is only to be of service to the reader, and to elucidate for him the thoughts hidden in this tractate. I shall now begin the chapters, which, in accordance with my intention, are to serve here as an introduction, which is to consist of eight chapters.

1. [↑](#) See Hebrew text p. 5, n. 2. The introductory words are by ibn Tibbon.
2. [↑](#) See Goldschmidt, *Der Babylonische Talmud*, I, Berlin, 1897, *Einleitung in die Mišnah von Moses Maimonides*, p. XXX; and *Hebrew Review*, vol. I, p. 191.
3. [↑](#) *Baba Ḳamma*, 30a: אמר רבי יהודה האי מאן דבעי למהוי חסידא
לקיים מילי דנזיקין רבא אמר מילי דאבות ואמרי לה מילי
דברכות.
4. [↑](#) *Abodah Zarah*, 20b: חסידות מביאה לידי ענוה ענוה מביאה לידי
יראת חטא יראת חטא מביאה לידי קדושה.
5. [↑](#) I. e., the verses of *Abot*.
6. [↑](#) See H. Malter, *Shem Tob Joseph Palquera*, in *JQR* (new series), vol. I, p. 163, n. 21.
7. [↑](#) The “ancient” philosophers upon whom M. drew, although not always from the sources (see Munk, *Guide*, I, p. 345, n. 4; Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 5, n. 4), are Socrates, Plato, the Stoics, especially Aristotle (see *Introduction*, p. 5, n. 2), Alexander of Aphrodisias (*Moreh*, I, 31; II, 3), and Themistius (*Ibid.*, I, 71). By the “recent” philosophers M. means Abu Nasr al-Farabi (*Ibid.*, I, 73, 74; II, 15, 18, 19; III, 18), Ibn Sina, al-Gazzali, Abu Bekr Ibn al-Zaig (*Ibid.*, I, 74; II, 24 twice; III, 29), but hardly Ibn Roshd (Averröes). The “works of various authors” refers to the ethical writings of M.’s Jewish predecessors, among whom were Saadia, Ibn Gabirol, Bahya, Bar Ḥiya, Ibn Zaddik, Yehudah ha-Levi, Abraham Ibn Ezra, and Ibn Daud. See M.’s *Letter to Ibn Tibbon*, in *Ḳobez Teshubot ha-Rambam*, II, 28b; Munk, *Ibid.*, I, p. 107, n. 1; p. 345, n. 4; p. 433, n. 2; 434, n. 4; III, p. 417, n. 2, and p. 438, n. 4; Beer, *Rabbi Moses ben Maimon* pp. 47-50; Geiger, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, III, *Moses ben Maimon*, p. 41; Kaufmann, *Attributenlehre*, p. 324, n. 186; Rosin, *Ibid.*, pp. 5-25, 96, n. 3; Wolff, *Acht Capitel, Introduction*, XII-XIII; Cohen, *Charakteristik*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I p. 79; in *JE*, articles on the Greek, Arabic, and Jewish philosophers mentioned in this note, and article by I. Broydé, *Arabic Philosophy—Its Influence on Judaism*, II, p. 58. On M.’s relation to Ibn Roshd, see Munk, *Notice sur Joseph ben-Jehouda*, p. 31, and n. 1; Steinschneider, *Catal. Bodl.*, *Moses Maimonides*.
8. [↑](#) See Jaraczewski, *Die Ethik des Maimonides*, etc., in *ZPhKr.*, XLVI, p. 9; and H. Malter, *Ibid.*, p. 169, n. 31.

CHAPTER I

CONCERNING THE HUMAN SOUL AND ITS FACULTIES^[1]

KNOW that the human soul is one,^[2] but that it has many diversified activities. Some of these activities have, indeed, been called souls, which has given rise to the opinion that man has many souls, as was the belief of the physicians, with the result that the most distinguished of them^[3] states in the introduction of his book that there are three souls, the physical, the vital, and the psychical.^[4] These activities are called *faculties* and *parts*, so that the phrase "parts of the soul," frequently employed by philosophers, is commonly used. By the word "parts", however, they do not intend to imply that the soul is divided into parts as are bodies, but they merely enumerate the different activities of the soul as being parts of a whole, the union of which makes up the soul.

Thou knowest that the improvement of the moral qualities is brought about by the healing of the soul and its activities.^[5] Therefore, just as the physician, who endeavors to cure the human body, must have a perfect knowledge of it in its entirety and its individual parts, just as he must know what causes sickness that it may be avoided, and must also be acquainted with the means by which a patient may be cured, so, likewise, he who tries to cure the soul, wishing to improve the moral qualities, must have a knowledge of the soul in its totality and its parts, must know how to prevent it from becoming diseased, and how to maintain its health.^[6]

So, I say that the soul has five faculties; the nutritive [also known as the "growing" faculty], the sensitive, the imaginative, the appetitive, and the rational.^[7] We have already stated in this chapter that our words concern themselves only with the human soul; for the nutritive faculty by which man is nourished is not the same, for instance, as that of the ass or the horse. Man is sustained by the nutritive faculty of the human soul, the ass thrives by means of the nutritive faculty of its soul, and the palm-tree^[8] flourishes by the nutritive faculty peculiar to its soul. Although we apply the same term *nutrition* to all of them indiscriminately, nevertheless, its signification is by no means the same. In the same way, the term *sensation* is used homonymously^[9] for man and beast; not with the idea, however, that the sensation of one species is the same as that of another, for each species has its own characteristic soul distinct from every other, with the result that there necessarily arises from each soul activities peculiar to itself. It is possible, however, that an activity of one soul may seem to be similar to that of another, in consequence of which one might think that both belong to the same class, and thus consider them to be alike; but such is not the case.

By way of elucidation, let us imagine that three dark places are illumined, one lit up by the sun shining upon it, the second by the moon, and the third by a flame. Now, in each of these places there is light, but the efficient cause in the one case is the sun, in the other the moon, and in the third the fire. So it is with sensation and its causes. In man it is the human soul, in the ass it is the soul

of the ass, and in the eagle, the soul of the eagle. These sensations have, moreover, nothing in common, except the homonymous term which is applied to them. Mark well this point, for it is very important, as many so-called philosophers have fallen into error regarding it, in consequence of which they have been driven to absurdities and fallacies.

Returning to our subject of the faculties of the soul, let me say that the nutritive faculty consists of (1) the power of attracting nourishment to the body, (2) the retention of the same, (3) its digestion (assimilation), (4) the repulsion of superfluities, (5) growth, (6) procreation, and (7) the differentiation of the nutritive juices that are necessary for sustenance from those which are to be expelled.^[10] The detailed discussion of these seven faculties—the means by which and how they perform their functions, in which members of the body their operations are most visible and perceptible, which of them are always present, and which disappear within a given time—belongs to the science of medicine, and need not be taken up here.

The faculty of sensation consists of the five well-known senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling, the last of which is found over the whole surface of the body, not being confined to any special member, as are the other four faculties.

The *imagination* is that faculty which retains impressions of things perceptible to the mind, after they have ceased to affect directly the senses which conceived them. This faculty, combining some of these impressions and separating others from one another, thus constructs out of originally perceived ideas some of which it has never received any impression, and which it could not possibly have perceived. For instance, one may imagine an iron ship floating in the air, or a man whose head reaches the heaven and whose feet rest on the earth, or an animal with a thousand eyes, and many other similar impossibilities which the imagination may construct and endow with an existence that is fanciful.^[11] In this regard, the *Mutakallimun*^[12] have fallen into grievous and pernicious error, as a result of which their false theories form the corner-stone of a sophistical system which divides things into the *necessary*, the *possible*, and the *impossible*; so that they believe, and have led others to believe, that all creations of the imagination are possible, not having in mind, as we have stated, that this faculty may attribute existence to that which cannot possibly exist.^[13]

The *appetitive* is that faculty by which a man desires, or loathes a thing, and from which there arise the following activities: the pursuit of an object or flight from it, inclination and avoidance, anger and affection, fear and courage, cruelty and compassion, love and hate, and many other similar psychic qualities.^[14] All parts of the body are subservient to these activities, as the ability of the hand to grasp, that of the foot to walk, that of the eye to see, and that of the heart to make one bold or timid. Similarly, the other members of the body, whether external or internal, are instruments of the appetitive faculty.^[15]

Reason, that faculty peculiar to man, enables him to understand, reflect, acquire knowledge of the sciences, and to discriminate between proper and improper actions.^[16] Its functions are partly practical and partly *speculative* (theoretical), the *practical* being, in turn, either *mechanical* or *intellectual*. By means of the *speculative* power, man knows things as they really are, and which, by their nature, are not subject to change. These are called the sciences^[17] in general. The mechanical power is that by which the arts, such as architecture, agriculture, medicine, and navigation are acquired.^[18] The intellectual power is that by which one, when he intends to do an act, reflects upon what he has premeditated, considers the possibility of performing it, and, if he thinks it possible, decides how it should be done.^[19]

This is all we have deemed it necessary to say in this regard concerning the soul. Know, however, that the soul, whose faculties and parts we have described above, and which is a unit, may be compared to matter in that it likewise has a *form*, which is *reason*. If the form (reason) does not communicate its impression to the soul, then the disposition existing in the soul to receive that form is of no avail, and exists to no purpose, as Solomon says, "Also in the want of knowledge in the soul there is nothing good".^[20] This means that if a soul has not attained a form but remains without intelligence, its existence is not a good one.^[21] However, this is not the place for us to discuss such problems as that of *form*, *matter*, and the number of different kinds of *intelligence*, and their means of acquisition;^[22] nor is it necessary for what we have to say concerning the subject of ethics, but is more appropriately to be discussed in the *Book on Prophecy*, which we mention (elsewhere).^[23]

Now I conclude this chapter, and begin the next.

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1. [↑] For a discussion of the contents of this chapter, see Scheyer, *Psychol. Syst. d. Maim.*, c. I; Jaraczewski, *ZPhKr.*, XLVI, pp. 9—10; and Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 45 ff. A summary of the *Perakim* is found in Speier, *The Threefold Cord* (London, 1891), Appendix.
 2. [↑] In *Moreh*, I, 41, M. explains the term soul (נִפְשׁ) as being "the vitality which is common to all sentient beings." Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, c. 1 (ed. Hicks, pp. 50 and 51), "Hence soul is the first actuality of a natural body having in it the capacity of life." On the homonymous use of the word נִפְשׁ, see *Moreh*, loc. cit.
 3. [↑] Hippocrates, the creator of medical science. See Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 45; Wolff, *Acht Capitel*, p. 1, n. 2; M. Schloessinger, in *JE.*, VI, p. 403.
 4. [↑] M. opposes the belief in the existence of three souls, but uses this classification to designate a threefold division of the soul's faculties, although, later in this chapter (see *infra*, pp. 38—39), he divides the faculties into five classes. In *Moreh*, III, 12, he points to the threefold division of the faculties, where he says, "all physical, psychical, and vital forces and organs that are possessed by one individual are found also in the other individuals." See,

also, *ibid.*, III, 46 (end), where the appetitive (התאווה), the vital (החיונית), and the psychic (הנפשית) faculties are enumerated. Bahya, Ibn Gabirol, and Ibn Zaddik seem to have believed in the existence of three souls in man. See I. Broydé in *JE.*, vol. xi, art. *Soul*. Abraham ibn Daud, in *Emunah Ramah*, I, 6 (ed. Weil, 1842), also, opposed the belief of the physicians, supporting the Aristotelian view of the unity of the soul, as did M. Consult Scheyer, *Psychol. Syst. d. Maim.*, p. 11, n. 3; Munk, *Guide*, I, p. 355, n. 1; idem, *Mélanges*, p. 38, n. 1; p. 40, n. 3; p. 54, n. 2; Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 45, n. 1; Kaufmann, *Attributenlehre*, p. 398, n. 60.

5. [↑] The phrase, *the improvement of the moral qualities* (תקון המדות), (אצל אח אלאכלאק), is one which M. probably borrowed from Ibn Gabirol, author of *Tikkun Middot ha-Nefesh* (*The Improvement of the Moral Qualities*) to designate the practical task of ethics. Cf. Rosin, *Ethik*, pp. 12, 37, n. 5. M. is not concerned with a theoretical discussion of ethics, but with the problem as to how one's moral qualities are to be improved, which is a practical question. Therefore, the science of curing the soul is to him as practical as is that of healing the body. What Aristotle says in *Eth. Nic.*, II, 2 may well apply here. "Since, then, the object of the present treatise is not mere speculation, as it is of some others (for we are inquiring not merely that we may know what virtue is, but that we may become virtuous, else it would be useless), we must consider as to the particular actions how we are to do them, because, as we have just said, the character of the habits that shall be formed depends on these."
6. [↑] Philo, too, speaks of a physician of the soul (*Quod Omnis Probus Liber*, I, 2). Cf. *Eth. Nic.*, I, 12, where Aristotle states that it is necessary for the *Politician* (moralist) to have a certain knowledge of the nature of the soul, just as it is for the oculist to have a knowledge of the whole body, and in fact more so, as *Politics* (ethics) is more important than the healing art.
7. [↑] M. agrees with Aristotle as to the number of the divisions of the faculties of the soul, but instead of the latter's faculty of *motion*, has that of *imagination*. δυνάμεις δ' εἶπομεν
 θρεπτικὸν (הזן), ὁρεκτικόν (המתעורר), αἰσθητικόν (המרגיש), κινητικὸν
 κατὰ τόπον, διανοητικόν (השכלי). *De Anima*, II, 3, ed. Hicks, pp. 58 and 59. M.'s division is preferable to that of Aristotle, *motion* being subservient to the *appetitive* and the *rational* faculties, as Aristotle himself states (*De Motu Animalium*, chaps. 6 and 8). M. considers *motion*, especially that of the limbs of the body, to be dependent upon the *appetitive* faculty (see *infra*, p. 43), and to be "an accident pertaining to living things" (*Moreh*, I, 26). Cf., also, *ibid.* I, 46 (שהתנוע אינה מעצם החי אבל מקרה דבק בו); and Aristotle, *Physics*, V, 2. See Scheyer, *Psychol. Syst. d. Maim.*, p. 11, n. 3; p. 14, n. 4. Al-Farabi (התחלות הנמצאות), in *ספר האסיף*, Leipzig, 1849, p. 2) divides the faculties as follows: והכח השכלי of M. והכח המתעורר והכח המדמה והכח המרגיש. In making his division, M. seems to have had in mind the divisions of Aristotle and al-Farabi. By adding the *nutritive* faculty (הזן), which Aristotle includes in his list, to the list of al-Farabi we have M.'s list. See Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 47, n. 4.
8. [↑] See Hebrew text, c. I, p. 9, n. 9.

9. [↑] בשתוף השם; Ar. באשתראך אלסם, *homonymously*, i. e. the participation of two things in the same name. In *Millot ha-Higgayon*, c. XII, M. defines this term as follows. "If a noun has a number of significations it is a homonym The word עֵין, which is used to designate *the eye which sees*, and a *fountain*, is a homonym. The common or appelative noun (see Munk, *Guide*, I, Introd., p. 6, n. 2) designates something common to two or more things, and by such a word we recognize, as regards each of these things, the class to which it belongs on account of the conception of the thing which each shares in common, as, for instance, the word *living* (חַי) which is applied to a man, a horse, a scorpion, and a fish; for life, which consists of nutrition and sensation, is a common possession of each one of these species." In this sense, the words *nutrition* (נִזּוֹן) and *sensation* (מַרְגִּישׁ) are homonyms. See Munk, *Guide*, I, Introd., p. 6, notes 2 and 3; and Kaufmann, *Attributenlehre*, pp. 420, n. 91, 460, n. 148, 461, n. 149.
10. [↑] The first four of these powers are discussed with more detail in *Moreh*, I, 72. See Munk, *Guide*, I, p. 367, n. 5.
11. [↑] M. defines *imagination* in *Moreh*, I, 73, *Tenth Proposition, Note*. It is the opposite of the intellect which "analyzes and divides the component parts of things, it forms abstract ideas of them, represents them in their true form as well as in their causal relations, derives from one object a great many facts, which—for the intellect—totally differ from each other, just as two human individuals appear different to the imagination; it distinguishes that which is the property of the genus from that which is peculiar to the individual,—and no proof is correct unless founded on the former; the intellect further determines whether certain qualities of a thing are essential or non-essential. *Imagination* has none of these functions. It only perceives the individual, the compound in that aggregate condition in which it presents itself to the senses; or it combines things which exist separately, joins some of them together, and represents them all as one body or as a force of the body. Hence it is that some imagine a man with a horse's head, or with wings, etc. This is called a fiction, a phantasm; it is a thing to which nothing in the actual world corresponds. Nor can *imagination* in any way obtain a purely immaterial image of an object, however abstract the form of the image may be. *Imagination* yields, therefore, no test for the reality of a thing." Further (*ibid.* II, 36) it is stated that part of the functions of the *imagination* is to retain impressions by the senses, to combine them, and chiefly to form images. The most perfect development of the imaginative faculty results in prophecy. See *infra*, p. 47, and n. 3.
12. [↑] The *Mutakallimun* were a sect of dogmatic or religious philosophers who tried to harmonize Mohammedan theology with Aristotelian philosophy. Starting with the "word of God" (*kalām*, Λόγος), as contained in the Koran, they endeavored to reconcile revelation with philosophy. I. T., in his *Glossary of Strange Words*, harshly criticizes them as "a sect of pseudoscientists without wisdom." T. J. De Boer says of their system of philosophy, "An assertion, expressed in logical or dialectic fashion, whether verbal or written, was called by the Arabs,—generally, but more particularly in religious teaching—*Kalam* (Λόγος), and those who advanced such assertions were called *Mutakallimun*. The name was transferred from the individual assertion to the entire system, and it covered also the introductory, elementary observations on Method,—and so on. Our best designation for the science of the *Kalam* is 'Theological Dialectics' or simply 'Dialectics', and in what follows we may translate *Mutakallimun* by 'Dialecticians'," *Geschichte der Philosophie*

im Islam, Stuttgart, 1901, p. 43 ff.; Eng. ed., London, 1903, pp. 42-43. To M. we are indebted for a knowledge of the details of the system of the *Mutakallimun*, which he describes in a masterly way in his famous attack on the *Kalam* (*Moreh*, I, 71—76). He is vehemently opposed to them, not because of the views they held in regard to the universe and God, many of which coincided with his own, but on account of the method they pursued in arriving at their conclusions. On the *Mutakallimun*, and the *Kalam*, see Yehudah ha-Levi, *Cuzari*, c. V; Munk, *Mélanges*, pp. 311-312, 318 ff.; idem, article *Arabes*, in *Dictionnaire des Sciences philosophiques*; idem, *Notice sur R. Saadia Gaon*, p. 156 ff.; idem, *Guide*, I, p. 335, n. 2; Steinschneider, *Heb. Lit.*, p. 117; idem, *HUB.*, p. 415; Kaufmann, *Attributenlehre*, see index; M. Gutmann, *Das Religionsphil. Syst. d. Mutakallimun nach der Berichte des Maimun*, Leipzig, 1885; Ludwig Stein, in *AGPh.*, vol. XI, pp. 330-334; Schreiner, *Der Kalâm in der jüdischen Literatur*, Berlin, 1895; S. Horowitz, in *ZDMG*, 57, p. 177 ff.; I. Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, (Heidelberg, 1910), p. 100 f.; 127 f.; 129; 172 f.; 177 f.; etc.

13. [↑] Cf. *Moreh*, I, 73, *Tenth Proposition*, in which M. describes the theory of *admissibility* of the *Mutakallimun*, which forms the principal support of their doctrine (ההקדמה העשירית היא זאת ההעברה אשר יזכרהו וזהו) (עמור חכמת המדברים). Everything conceived by the imagination, they maintain, is admitted as *possible*. Cf., also, *ibid.*, I, 49; III, 15. See Scheyer, *Psychol. Syst. d. Maim.*, pp. 12-13; Munk, *Guide*, I, p. 400, n. 2.
14. [↑] המקרים הנפשיים, *psychic accidents*. Cf. *Moreh*, I, 51. "It is a self evident fact that the attribute is not inherent in the object to which it is ascribed, but it is superadded to its essence, and is consequently an accident." See, also, *ibid.*, I, 73. *Fourth Proposition*. With M.'s description of the appetitive faculty compare that of al-Farabi, in *התחלות הנמצאות*, p. 2:

והמעוררת היא אשר בה יהיה ההתעוררת האנושית כשיבקש
הדבר או שיברח ממנו, או שיתעבהו או שימאסהו, או
שירחיקהו, ובו יהיה השנאה והאהבה, והריעות והאיבה, והיראה
והבטחון, והכעס והרצון, והאכזריות והרחמנות ושאר מקרי
הנפש.

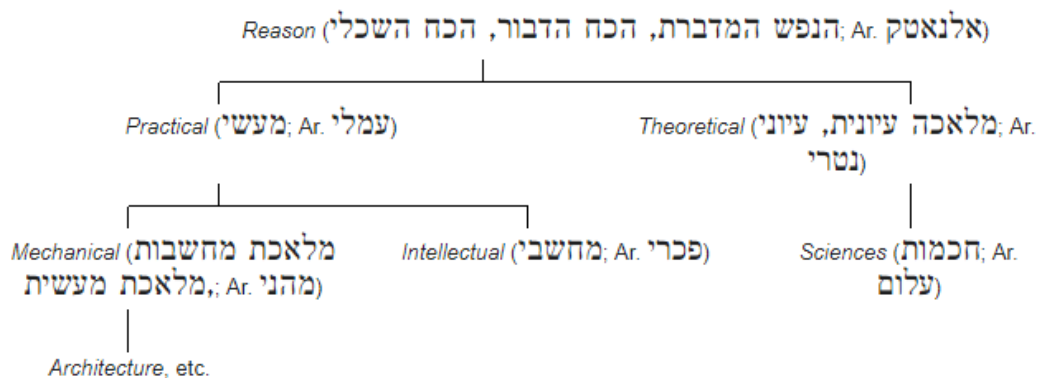
15. [↑] Cf. *Moreh*, I, 46.: הכלים כולם באמת אחד הנראה מהם והפנימי: כולם כלים לפעולת הנפש המתחלפות וכ' All the organs of the body are employed in the various actions of the soul. Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, III, 10, ed. Hicks, pp. 152 and 153.
16. [↑] Cf. *Millot ha-Higgayon*, c. XIV (beg.): "The word *dibbur* as used by former philosophers of cultured nations, is a homonym having three significations. In the first place, it is used to designate that power peculiar to man by which he forms conceptions, acquires a knowledge of the sciences, and differentiates between the proper and the improper. This is called the reasoning faculty or soul." Cf. Ibn Daud, *Emunah Ramah*, I, 6.
17. [↑] Cf. *Eth. Nic.*, VI, 3: "What science is is plain from the following considerations, if one is to speak accurately, instead of being led away by resemblances. For we all conceive that what we scientifically know cannot be

otherwise than it is ... So, then, whatever comes within the the range of science *is* by necessity, and therefore eternal—because all things are so which exist necessarily—and all eternal things are without beginning, and indestructible.”

18. ¹ Cf. *Millot ha-Higgayon*, *loc. cit.*: והשם מלאכה אצל הקדומים שם משתף יפילו על כל חכמה עיונית ויפילוהו גם כן על כל המעשים המלאכתיים, ויקראו כל חכמה מחכמת הפילוסופיא מלאכה עיונית, ויקראו כל אחת מהנגרות והחצבות ומה שדומה להן מלאכה מעשית. Cf., also, *Eth. Nic.* VI, 4, on “Art.”

19. ¹ With M.’s definition of the *rational faculty* compare that of al-Farabi והכח המדבר הוא אשר בו יאחוז האדם: (התחלות הגמצאות) (p. 2); See Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 47, n. 4; Kaufmann, *Attributenlehre*, p. 398, and note 60. On this faculty and its functions, see Scheyer, *Psychol. Syst. d. Maim.*, pp. 14-29; Rosin, *Ethik*, pp. 49-51, and Wolff, *Acht Capitel*, p. 7, n. 1.

The following scheme will elucidate the divisions of the functions of the *rational faculty*, according to M.



20. ¹ Prov. XIX, 2.

21. ¹ M. considers *matter* and *form* in the Aristotelian sense. The *principia* of all existing, transient things are *matter*, *form*, and the *absence of a particular form* (*Moreh*, I, 17). *Matter* (חומר, מאדה, ἡ ὑλη) consists of the underlying, basic substance of a thing, which has a potential but not a real existence, its true nature consisting in the property of never being without a disposition to receive a *form* (*ibid.*, III, 8). Every substance is endowed with a *form* (צורה, צורה, to εἶδος), or incorporeal being (*ibid.*, II, 12), by means of which that substance is what it is. That is, through *form* that which is potentially in existence comes into real existence (Aristotle, *Physics*, II, 3; *Metaphysics*, I, 3), and upon it the reality and essence of a thing depend. When the *form* is destroyed, the thing’s existence is terminated (*Moreh*, III, 69). As soon as a substance has received a certain *form*, the *absence* or *privation* (אלעדם, ההעדר) of that *form* which it has just received has ceased, and it is replaced by the *privation* of another *form*, and so on with all possible *forms* (*ibid.*, I, 17).

Cf. Aristotle, *Physics*, I, 5-7; also רוח הן, c. IX. *Matter* is constantly seeking to cast off the *form* it has in order to receive another, and so *form* does not remain permanently in a substance. M. aptly compares *matter* to a faithless wife, who, although not being without a husband, continually seeks another man in his place (*Moreh*, III, 8). The soul, according to Aristotle, is the *form* of the body which, as *matter*, has merely a potentiality for existence. See *supra*, p. 37, n. 2. He says, "It must follow, then, that soul is substance in the sense that it is the *form* of a natural body having in it the capacity of life." (*De Anima*, II, 1, ed. Hicks, pp. 48 and 49). M. agrees with this, and says in *Yesode ha-Torah*, IV, 8. "The soul of all flesh is its *form* which God has given it." The human soul, however, needs in turn a *form* in order that it may become a reality. The soul's *form* is, as M. states here, *reason* (שכל, עקל, vous), or more definitely the *acquired reason* (שכל הנקנה; see Scheyer, *Psychol. Syst. d. Maim.*, c. III; also p. 59, note E; p. 65 ff., especially p. 66), and it is this that makes man what he is. Cf. *Moreh*, I, 7. "It is acknowledged that a man who does not possess this *form*, is no man."

22. ↑ See *Moreh*, I, 68; Scheyer, *ibid.*, c. II, c. III, and especially Munk, *Guide*, I, pp. 304-308, note.

23. ↑ In *Perek Helek, Seventh Article of Faith* (Holzer, *Dogmenlehre*, p. 24; I. Friedlaender, *Arabic Writings of M.*, p. 32), M. mentions his intention of writing

a *Book on Prophecy* and a *Book of Harmony* (ולפיכך אניח אותו)

למקומו אם בפירוש הדרשות אשר יעדתי או בספר הנבואה

(שאני מתעסק בו וכ' for the purpose of elucidating the exoteric lessons of the prophets and of the *Midrashim*. After having started, however, he abandoned this intention, and later incorporated the material for the *Book on Prophecy* in the *Moreh*, Part II, in chapters 32 to 48, and that of the *Book of Harmony* (ספר ההשואה) he scattered throughout the *Moreh*. See *Moreh*, I, *Introd.*; Bloch, *Charakteristik und Inhaltsangabe des Moreh Nebuchim*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, pp. 7, 8 and 15.

CHAPTER II

CONCERNING THE TRANSGRESSIONS OF THE FACULTIES OF THE SOUL AND THE DESIGNATION OF THOSE FACULTIES WHICH ARE THE SEAT OF THE VIRTUES AND THE VICES^[1]

KNOW that transgressions and observances of the Law have their origin only in two of the faculties of the soul, namely, the *sensitive*^[2] and the *appetitive*, and that to these two faculties alone are to be ascribed all transgressions and observances. The faculties of *nutrition* and *imagination* do not give rise to observance or transgression, for in connection with neither is there any conscious or voluntary act. That is, man cannot consciously suspend their functions, nor can he curtail any one of their activities. The proof of this is that the functions of both these faculties, the nutritive and the imaginative, continue to be operative when one is asleep, which is not true of any other of the soul's faculties.^[3]

As regards the *rational* faculty, uncertainty prevails (among philosophers)^[4], but I maintain that observance and transgression may also originate in this faculty, in so far as one believes a true or a false doctrine, though no action which may be designated as an observance or a transgression results therefrom.^[5] Consequently, as I said above, these two faculties (the sensitive and the appetitive) alone really produce transgressions and observances.

Now, as for the virtues, they are of two kinds, *moral* and *intellectual*, with the corresponding two classes of vices.^[6] The intellectual virtues belong to the rational faculty. They are (1) *wisdom*, which is the knowledge of the direct and indirect causes of things based on a previous realization of the existence of those things, the causes of which have been investigated;^[7] (2) *reason*, consisting of (a) *inborn, theoretical reason*, that is, axioms,^[8] (b) *the acquired intellect*,^[9] which we need not discuss here, and (c) *sagacity* and *intellectual cleverness*, which is the ability to perceive quickly, and to grasp an idea without delay, or in a very short time. The vices of this faculty are the antitheses or the opposites of these virtues.

Moral virtues belong only to the appetitive faculty to which that of sensation in this connection is merely subservient.^[10] The virtues of this faculty are very numerous, being moderation, [i.e. fear of sin], liberality, honesty, meekness, humility, contentedness, [which the Rabbis call "wealth", when they say, "Who is truly wealthy? He who is contented with his lot"^[11]], courage, [faith-fulness], and other virtues akin to these. The vices of this faculty consist of a deficiency or of an exaggeration of these qualities.

As regards the faculties of nutrition and imagination, it cannot be said that they have vices or virtues, but that the nutritive functions work properly or improperly; as, for instance, when one says that a man's digestion is good or bad, or that one's imagination is confused or clear. This does not mean, however, that they have virtues or vices.

So much we wished to discuss in this chapter.

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1. [↑] For a discussion of the contents of this chapter, see Scheyer, *Psychol. Syst. d. Maim.*, p. 102 ff.; Jaraczewski, *ZPhKr.*, XLVI p. 10; and Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 54 ff. On the title, see Hebrew text, c. II, p. 14, n. 1 and 2.
 2. [↑] In ascribing transgressions and observances to the faculty of *sensation*, M. differs from Aristotle who asserts that *sense* is the originating cause of no moral action, since brutes, too, are possessed of *sense*, but are in no ways partakers of moral actions (*Eth. Nic.*, VI, 2). M., however, draws a distinction between the sensitive faculty of man and that of animals. *Sensation* as applied to man and beast is a homonymous term, the sensitive faculty of man being different from that of all other animate beings. See *supra*, c. I, pp. 39—40.
 3. [↑] M. differs from al-Farabi who ascribes participation in moral and immoral acts to all the faculties of the soul (התחלות הגמצאת, p. 35 ff.). The latter, however, does not consider *nutrition* to be one of the faculties. Abraham ibn Daud, including *nutrition* among the soul's faculties, allots to each a cardinal virtue (*Emunah Ramah*, III, p. 110). Aristotle excludes the *imagination* as one of the faculties directly affecting the performance of virtues, but considers it as producing movement through the agency of *appetency* (*De Anima*, III, 10). M., later, departs somewhat from the view he holds in the *Perakim* regarding the *imagination*, and, in agreement with Aristotle, considers it to be bound up indirectly, through the *appetitive* faculty, with conscious activity (see Scheyer, *ibid.*, pp. 98, and 105). This is the sense of the passage in *Moreh*, II, 4, where he states that animate beings move either by *instinct* (טבע) considered equivalent to (כח המתעורר), or by *reason*. *Instinct* he defines as the intention of an animate being to approach something agreeable, or to shun something disagreeable, as, for instance, to approach water on account of thirst, or to avoid the sun on account of its heat. He, then, goes on to say that it makes no difference whether the thing really exists or is imaginary, since the *imagination* of something agreeable or of something disagreeable likewise causes the animate being to move (כי בדמיון מה שהוא כנגד) (ומה שיאות יתנועע ג"כ החי). Furthermore, in *Moreh*, II, 12, he declares that all defects in speech or character are either the direct or indirect work of the *imagination* (כי כל חסרון בדבר או במדות הוא פעל הדמיון או) (נמשך אחר פעלו). In regard to prophecy, M. lays great stress upon the *imagination* (*ibid.*, II, 35), considering prophecy to be the most perfect development of the imaginative faculty. During sleep this faculty is the same as when it receives prophecy, except that when asleep the *imagination* is not fully developed, and has not reached its highest perfection. See *supra*, c. I, p. 41, n. 1.
 4. [↑] See Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 55, n. 1.
 5. [↑] Cf. *Moreh*, II, 4, "But even a being that is endowed with the faculty of forming an idea, and possesses a soul with the faculty of moving, does not change its place on each occasion that it forms an idea; *for an idea alone does not produce motion*, as has been explained in (Aristotle's) *Metaphysics*. We can easily understand this, when we consider how often we form ideas of certain things, yet do not move towards them, though we are able to do so; it

is only when the desire arises for the thing imagined that we move in order to obtain it.” Cf. *De Anima* III, 10. The same thought is expressed in *Eth. Nic.* VI, 2, “And so since moral virtue is a disposition exercising choice, and choice is will consequent on deliberation, the reason must be true and the will right to constitute good choice, and what the reason affirms the will must pursue... *But operation of the intellect by itself moves nothing*, only when directed to a certain result—i.e. exercised in moral action...” See Scheyer, *ibid.*, p. 103—104; and Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 56, n. 2.

6. [↑] Cf. *Eth. Nic.*, (ἀρται ἡθικά and διανοητικά) I, 11 (end); II, 1; VI, 2; *Eudemian Ethics*, II, 1; *Millot ha-Higgayon*, c. XIV (מעלות המדות).
מעלות דבוריות).
7. [↑] Wisdom (חכמה), according to M., is used of four different things (*Moreh*, III, 54). It denotes (1) the knowledge of those truths which lead to the knowledge of God, (2) the knowledge of any workmanship, (3) the acquisition of moral principles, and (4) cunning and subtlety. In *Moreh*, I, 69, where M. demonstrates that God is the *Primal Cause*, in agreement with Aristotle (*Physics*, II, 7), he asserts that everything owes its origin to four causes, the substance, the form, the *agens* (פועל), and the final cause (תכלית). These are sometimes direct (קרובים), and sometimes indirect (רחוקים), though each in itself is a *cause* (עלה or סבה, corresponding to Ar. *علة* and *سبب*; αἰτία, αἰτίον. Cf. Munk, *Guide*, I, p. 313, n. 1.)
8. [↑] Literally, *first impressions* (המושכלות הראשונות; Ar. מעקולאט. *אלאול*; ἀρχαὶ τῶν ἀποδεικτῶν ἀξιώματα, *intelligibilia prima*), which are fundamental principles or axioms that would need no proof even though man were left in his primitive state (*Moreh*, I, 51), and which are explained by common sense. There are four kinds of knowledge which need no demonstration, one of them being the knowledge of axioms, as, for instance, that the whole is greater than a part, that two is an even number, that two things equal to the same thing are equal to each other (*Millot ha-Higgayon*, c. XIV), and that one cannot both affirm and deny a thing. See Scheyer, note to *Moreh*, I, 51. Cf. *Eth. Nic.*, VI, 6 on *Intuitive Apprehension*; Scheyer, *Psychol. Syst. d. Maim.*, p. 16—17; and Munk, *Guide*, I, p. 128, n. 3.
9. [↑] For the definition and description of the *acquired intellect* (שכל הנקנה) or שכל הנקנה הנאצל; Ar. *אלעקל אלמסתפאר*, νοῦς ἐπικτητός), see *Moreh*, I, 72; I. T. *Glossary of Strange Words*, *sub voce* (under ס); Scheyer, *ibid.*, pp. 17—19, 39—93; Munk, *Guide*, I, pp. 307—308, note; Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 57, n. 1; Wolff, *Acht Capitel*, p. 11, n. 1; and idem, *Mûsa b. Maimûns eschatologische Gedanken*, p. 13, etc.
10. [↑] See Scheyer, *ibid.*, pp. 104—105, and Rosin, *ibid.*, p. 57, n. 4.
11. [↑] *Abot*, IV, 1.

CHAPTER III

CONCERNING THE DISEASES OF THE SOUL^[1]

THE ancients^[2] maintained that the soul, like the body, is subject to good health and illness. The soul's healthful state is due to its condition, and that of its faculties, by which it constantly does what is right, and performs what is proper, while the illness of the soul is occasioned by its condition, and that of its faculties, which results in its constantly doing wrong, and performing actions that are improper.^[3] The science of medicine investigates the health of the body. Now, just as those, who are physically ill, imagine that, on account of their vitiated tastes, the sweet is bitter and the bitter is sweet—and likewise fancy the wholesome to be unwholesome—and just as their desire grows stronger, and their enjoyment increases for such things as dust, coal, very acidic and sour foods, and the like—which the healthy loathe and refuse, as they are not only not beneficial even to the healthy, but possibly harmful—so those whose souls are ill, that is the wicked and the morally perverted, imagine that the bad is good, and that the good is bad. The wicked man, moreover, continually longs for excesses which are really pernicious, but which, on account of the illness of his soul, he considers to be good.^[4] Likewise, just as when people, unacquainted with the science of medicine, realize that they are sick, and consult a physician, who tells them what they must do, forbidding them to partake of that which they imagine beneficial, and prescribing for them things which are unpleasant and bitter, in order that their bodies may become healthy, and that they may again choose the good and spurn the bad, so those whose souls become ill should consult the sages, the moral physicians, who will advise them against indulging in those evils which they (the morally ill) think are good, so that they may be healed by that art of which I shall speak in the next chapter, and through which the moral qualities are restored to their normal condition. But, if he who is morally sick be not aware of his illness, imagining that he is well, or, being aware of it, does not seek a remedy, his end will be similar to that of one, who, suffering from bodily ailment, yet continuing to indulge himself, neglects to be cured, and who in consequence surely meets an untimely death.

Those who know that they are in a diseased state, but nevertheless yield to their inordinate passions, are described in the truthful Law which quotes their own words, "Though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, in order that the indulgence of the passions may appease the thirst for them."^[5] This means that, intending to quench the thirst, it is, on the contrary, intensified. He who is ignorant of his illness is spoken of in many places by Solomon, who says, "The way of the fool is straight in his own eyes, but he who hearkeneth unto counsel is wise".^[6] This means that he who listens to the counsel of the sage is wise, for the sage teaches him the way that is actually right, and not the one that he (the morally ill) erroneously considers to be such. Solomon also says, "There is many a way which seemeth even before a man; but its ends are ways unto death".^[7] Again, in regard to these who are morally ill, in that they do not know

what is injurious from that which is beneficial, he says, “The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know against what they stumble.”^[8]

The art of healing the diseases of the soul will, however, form the subject-matter of the fourth chapter.

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1. [↑] For a discussion of the contents of this chapter, see Jaraczewski, *ZPhKr.*, XLVI pp. 10—11; and Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 77 ff. A short summary is contained in *H. Deot*, II, 1.
 2. [↑] See *Foreword*, p. 35 n. 3.
 3. [↑] Cf. *Pirke Mosheh*, in *Kobez*, II, 20b, אמר משה מן הידוע מאמר הפילוסופים שיש לנפש בריאות וחולי וכ'.
 4. [↑] Aristotle, in discussing *Pleasures* (*Eth. Nic.*, X, 5), says, “Yet in the case of human creatures they (pleasures) differ not a little; for the very same things please some and pain others; and what are painful and hateful to some are pleasant to and liked by others. The same is the case with sweet things; the same will not seem so to the man in a fever as to him who is in health; nor will the invalid and the person in robust health have the same notion of warmth. The same is the case with other things also.” Cf., also, *H. Deot*, II, 1, “To those who are diseased the bitter tastes sweet and the sweet bitter. Some sick people, moreover, crave and long for food that is unfit to eat, such as dust and charcoal, spurning food that is beneficial, such as bread and meat, according to the intensity of their illness. Likewise, people whose souls are diseased desire and love evil characteristics, and hate the moral path, being loathe to pursue it, since, on account of their illness, it is very difficult for them to do so. Thus, Isaiah says of such people, ‘Wo unto those that say of the evil it is good, and of the good it is evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter’ (V, 20). Concerning them it is also said that ‘(they are those) who leave the path of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness’ (Prov. II, 13).”
 5. [↑] Dt. XXIX, 18.
 6. [↑] Prov. XII, 15.
 7. [↑] *Ibid.*, XIV, 12.
 8. [↑] *Ibid.*, IV, 19. Cf. *H. Deot*, II, 1, “What is the remedy for those whose souls are diseased? Let them consult the sages who are the physicians of the soul, who will cure their disease by teaching them those characteristics by which they may return to the moral path, and recognize their evil traits. Concerning those who do not seek the sages in order to be cured, Solomon says, ‘wisdom and instruction fools despise’ (Prov. I, 7).” The conception of a spiritual healing originated neither with Aristotle nor with M. There are many biblical passages based on such a comparison with the healing art, as Jer. III, 22: ארפא משובתכם; Hos. XIV, 5: ארפא משובתם; Ps. XLI, 5: ארפא נפשי כי חטאתי לך; etc. Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 78, n. 4, refers to similar passages in Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic literature.

CHAPTER IV

CONCERNING THE CURE OF THE DISEASES OF THE SOUL^[1]

GOOD deeds are such as are equilibrated,^[2] maintaining the mean between two equally bad extremes, the *too much* and the *too little*.^[3] Virtues are psychic conditions and dispositions which are mid-way between two reprehensible extremes, one of which is characterized by an exaggeration, the other by a deficiency.^[4] Good deeds are the product of these dispositions. To illustrate, abstemiousness is a disposition which adopts a mid-course between inordinate passion and total insensibility to pleasure. Abstemiousness, then, is a proper rule of conduct, and the psychic disposition which gives rise to it is an ethical quality; but inordinate passion, the extreme of excess, and total insensibility to enjoyment, the extreme of deficiency^[5], are both absolutely pernicious. The psychic dispositions, from which these two extremes, inordinate passion and insensibility, result—the one being an exaggeration, the other a deficiency—are alike classed among moral imperfections.

Likewise, liberality is the mean between sordidness and extravagance; courage, between recklessness and cowardice; dignity, between haughtiness and loutishness^[6]; humility, between arrogance and self-abasement; contentedness, between avarice and slothful indifference; and magnificence, between meanness and profusion. [Since definite terms do not exist in our language with which to express these latter qualities, it is necessary to explain their content, and tell what the philosophers meant by them. A man is called magnificent whose whole intention is to do good to others by personal service, by money, or advice, and with all his power, but without meanwhile bringing suffering or disgrace upon himself. That is the medium line of conduct. The mean man is one who does not want others to succeed in anything, even though he himself may not thereby suffer any loss, hardship, or injury. That is the one extreme. The profuse man, on the contrary, is one who willingly performs the above-mentioned deeds, in spite of the fact that thereby he brings upon himself great injury, or disgrace, terrible hardship, or considerable loss. That is the other extreme.^[7] Gentleness is the mean between irascibility and insensibility to shame and disgrace; and modesty, between impudence and shamefacedness.^[8] [The explanation of these latter terms, gleaned from the sayings of our sages (may their memory be blessed!) seems to be this. In their opinion, a modest man is one who is very bashful, and therefore modesty is the mean. This we gather from their saying, "A shamefaced man cannot learn".^[9] They also assert, "A modest man is worthy of Paradise"^[10], but they do not say this of a shamefaced man. Therefore, I have thus arranged them."^[11] So it is with the other qualities. One does not necessarily have to use conventional terms for these qualities, if only the ideas are clearly fixed in the mind.^[12]

It often happens, however, that men err as regards these qualities, imagining that one of the extremes is good, and is a virtue. Sometimes, the extreme of the *too much* is considered noble, as when temerity is made a virtue, and those who recklessly risk their lives are hailed as heroes. Thus, when people

see a man, reckless to the highest degree, who runs deliberately into danger, intentionally tempting death, and escaping only by mere chance, they laud such a one to the skies, and say that he is a hero. At other times, the opposite extreme, the *too little*, is greatly esteemed, and the coward^[13] is considered a man of forbearance; the idler, as being a person of a contented disposition; and he, who by the dullness of his nature is callous to every joy, is praised as a man of moderation, [that is, one who eschews sin]. In like manner, profuse liberality and extreme lavishness are erroneously extolled as excellent characteristics.^[14] This is, however, an absolutely mistaken view, for the really praiseworthy is the medium course of action to which every one should strive to adhere, always weighing his conduct carefully, so that he may attain the proper mean.

Know, moreover, that these moral excellences or defects cannot be acquired, or implanted in the soul, except by means of the frequent repetition of acts resulting from these qualities, which, practised during a long period of time, accustoms us to them.^[15] If these acts performed are good ones, then we shall have gained a virtue; but if they are bad, we shall have acquired a vice. Since, however, no man is born with an innate virtue or vice, as we shall explain in Chapter VIII, and, as every one's conduct from childhood up is undoubtedly influenced by the manner of living of his relatives and countrymen,^[16] his conduct may be in accord with the rules of moderation; but, then again, it is possible that his acts may incline towards either extreme, as we have demonstrated, in which case, his soul becomes diseased.^[17] In such a contingency, it is proper for him to resort to a cure, exactly as he would were his body suffering from an illness. So, just as when the equilibrium of the physical health is disturbed,^[18] and we note which way it is tending in order to force it to go in exactly the opposite direction until it shall return to its proper condition, and, just as when the proper adjustment is reached, we cease this operation, and have recourse to that which will maintain the proper balance, in exactly the same way must we adjust the moral equilibrium.^[19] Let us take, for example, the case of a man in whose soul there has developed a disposition [of great avarice] on account of which he deprives himself [of every comfort in life], and which, by the way, is one of the most detestable of defects, and an immoral act, as we have shown in this chapter. If we wish to cure this sick man, we must not command him merely [to practise] deeds of generosity, for that would be as ineffective as a physician trying to cure a patient consumed by a burning fever by administering mild medicines, which treatment would be inefficacious. We must, however, induce him to squander so often, and to repeat his acts of profusion so continuously until that propensity which was the cause of his avarice has totally disappeared. Then, when he reaches that point where he is about to become a squanderer, we must teach him to moderate his profusion, and tell him to continue with deeds of generosity, and to watch out with due care lest he relapse either into lavishness or niggardliness.^[20]

If, on the other hand, a man is a squanderer, he must be directed to practise strict economy, and to repeat acts of niggardliness. It is not necessary, however, for him to perform acts of avarice as many times as the mean man

should those of profusion. This subtle point, which is a canon and secret of the science of medicine, tells us that it is easier for a man of profuse habits to moderate them to generosity, than it is for a miser to become generous. Likewise, it is easier for one who is apathetic [and eschews sin] to be excited to moderate enjoyment, than it is for one, burning with passion, to curb his desires. Consequently, the licentious man must be made to practise restraint more than the apathetic man should be induced to indulge his passions; and, similarly, the coward requires exposure to danger more frequently than the reckless man should be forced to cowardice. The mean man needs to practise lavishness to a greater degree than should be required of the lavish to practise meanness. This is a fundamental principle of the science of curing moral ills, and is worthy of remembrance.

On this account, the saintly ones^[21] were not accustomed to cause their dispositions to maintain an exact balance between the two extremes, but deviated somewhat, by way of [caution and] restraint, now to the side of exaggeration, and now to that of deficiency. Thus, for instance, abstinence would incline to some degree towards excessive denial of all pleasures; valor would approach somewhat towards temerity; generosity to lavishness; modesty to extreme humility,^[22] and so forth. This is what the rabbis hinted at, in their saying, “Do more than the strict letter of the law demands.”^[23]

When, at times, some of the pious ones deviated to one extreme by fasting, keeping nightly vigils^[24], refraining from eating meat or drinking wine, renouncing sexual intercourse, clothing themselves in woolen and hairy garments, dwelling in the mountains, and wandering about in the wilderness, they did so, partly as a means of restoring the health of their souls, as we have explained above, and partly because of the immorality of the towns-people.^[25] When the pious saw that they themselves might become contaminated by association with evil men, or by constantly seeing their actions, fearing that their own morals might become corrupt on account of contact with them, they fled to the wildernesses far from their society, as the prophet Jeremiah said, “Oh that some one would grant me in the wilderness the dwelling of a wanderer, and I would quit my people and abandon them; for they are all adulterers, a troop of faithless evil-doers.”^[26] When the ignorant observed saintly men acting thus, not knowing their motives, they considered their deeds of themselves virtuous, and so, blindly imitating their acts, thinking thereby to become like them, chastised their bodies with all kinds of afflictions, imagining that they had acquired perfection and moral worth, and that by this means man would approach nearer to God, as if He hated the human body, and desired its destruction. It never dawned upon them, however, that these actions were bad and resulted in moral imperfection of the soul. Such men can only be compared to one who, ignorant of the art of healing, when he sees skilful physicians administering to those at the point of death [purgatives known in Arabic as] colocynth, scammony, aloe, and the like, and depriving them of food, in consequence of which they are completely cured and escape death, foolishly concludes that since these things cure sickness, they must be all the more efficacious in preserving the health, or prolonging life. If a person

should take these things constantly, and treat himself as a sick person, then he would really become ill. Likewise, those who are spiritually well, but have recourse to remedies, will undoubtedly become morally ill.

The perfect Law which leads us to perfection—as one who knew it well testifies by the words, "The Law of the Lord is perfect restoring the soul; the testimonies of the Lord are faithful making wise the simple"^[27]—recommends none of these things (such as self-torture, flight from society etc.). On the contrary, it aims at man's following the path of moderation, in accordance with the dictates of nature, eating, drinking, enjoying legitimate sexual intercourse, all in moderation, and living among people in honesty and uprightness, but not dwelling in the wilderness or in the mountains, or clothing oneself in garments of hair and wool, or afflicting the body. The Law even warns us against these practices, if we interpret it according to what tradition tells us is the meaning of the passage concerning the Nazarite, "And he (the priest) shall make an atonement for him because he hath sinned against the soul."^[28] The Rabbis ask, "Against what soul has he sinned? Against his own soul, because he has deprived himself of wine. Is this not then a conclusion *a minori ad majus*? If one who deprives himself merely of wine must bring an atonement, how much more incumbent is it upon one who denies himself every enjoyment."^[29]

By the words of our prophets and of the sages of our Law, we see that they were bent upon moderation and the care of their souls and bodies, in accordance with what the Law prescribes and with the answer which God gave through His prophet to those who asked whether the fast-day once a year should continue or not. They asked Zechariah, "Shall I weep in the fifth month with abstinence as I have done already these many years?"^[30] His answer was, "When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh (month) already these seventy years, did ye in anywise fast for me, yea for me? And if ye do eat and if ye do drink are ye not yourselves those that eat and yourselves those that drink?"^[31] After that, he enjoined upon them justice and virtue alone, and not fasting, when he said to them, "Thus hath said the Lord of Hosts. Execute justice and show kindness and mercy every man to his brother."^[32] He said further, "Thus hath said the Lord of Hosts, the fast-day of the fourth, and the fast-day of the fifth, and the fast of seventh, and the fast of the tenth (month) shall become to the house of Judah gladness, and joy, and merry festivals; only love ye truth and peace."^[33] Know that by "truth" the intellectual virtues are meant, for they are immutably true, as we have explained in Chapter II, and that by "peace" the moral virtues are designated, for upon them depends the peace of the world.

But to resume. Should those of our co-religionists—and it is of them alone that I speak—who imitate the followers of other religions, maintain that when they torment their bodies, and renounce every joy, that they do so merely to discipline the faculties of their souls by inclining somewhat to the one extreme, as is proper, and in accordance with our own recommendations in this chapter, our answer is that they are in error, as I shall now demonstrate. The Law did not lay down its prohibitions, or enjoin its commandments, except for just this

purpose, namely, that by its disciplinary effects we may persistently maintain the proper distance from either extreme. For, the restrictions regarding all the forbidden foods, the prohibitions of illicit intercourse, the fore-warning against prostitution, the duty of performing the legal marriage-rites which, nevertheless, does not permit intercourse at all times, as, for instance, during the period of menstruation, and after child-birth, besides its being otherwise restricted by our sages, and entirely interdicted during the daytime, as we have explained in the *Tractate Sanhedrin*—all of these God commanded in order that we should keep entirely distant from the extreme of the inordinate indulgence of the passions, and, even departing from the exact medium, should incline somewhat towards self-denial, so that there may be firmly rooted in our souls the disposition for moderation.^[34]

Likewise, all that is contained in the Law concerning the giving of tithes, the gleaning of the harvest, the forgotten sheaves, the single grapes, and the small bunches in the vineyards for the poor, the law of the Sabbatical year, and of the Jubilee, the giving of charity according to the wants of the needy one, all these approach the extreme of lavishness to be practised in order that we may depart far from its opposite, stinginess, and thus, nearing the extreme of excessive prodigality, there may become instilled in us the quality of generosity.^[35] If you should test most of the commandments from this point of view, you would find that they are all for the discipline and guidance of the faculties of the soul. Thus, the Law forbids revenge, the bearing of a grudge, and blood-revenge by saying, "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge";^[36] "thou shalt surely unload with him"^[37] (the ass of him who hates you); "thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again"^[38] (thy brother's ass or ox which has fallen by the way). These commandments are intended to weaken the force of wrath or anger. Likewise, the command, "Thou shalt surely bring them back"^[39] (thy brother's ox or lamb which has gone astray), is meant to remove the disposition of avarice. Similarly, "Before the hoary head shalt thou rise up, and honor the face of the old man",^[40] "Honor thy father and thy mother"^[41] etc., "thou shalt not depart from the sentence which they may tell thee"^[42] etc., are intended to do away with boldness, and to produce modesty. Then, in order to keep away from the other extreme, i. e. of excessive bashfulness, we are told, "Thou shalt indeed rebuke thy neighbor" etc.,^[43] "thou shalt not fear him"^[44] (the false prophet) etc., so that excessive bashfulness, too, should disappear, in order that we pursue the medium course. Should, however, anyone who would without doubt be foolish if he did so try to enforce these commands with additional rigor, as, for instance, by prohibiting eating and drinking more than does the Law, or by restricting connubial intercourse to a greater degree, or by distributing all of his money among the poor, or using it for sacred purposes more freely than the Law requires, or by spending it entirely upon sacred objects and upon the sanctuary, he would indeed be performing improper acts, and would be unconsciously going to either one or the other extreme, thus forsaking completely the proper mean. In this connection, I have never heard a more remarkable saying than that of the Rabbis, found in the *Palestinian Talmud*, in

the ninth chapter of the treatise *Nedarim*, where they greatly blame those who bind themselves by oaths and vows, in consequence of which they are fettered like prisoners. The exact words they use are, "Said Rabbi Iddai, in the name of Rabbi Isaac, 'Dost thou not think that what the Law prohibits is sufficient for thee that thou must take upon thyself additional prohibitions?'"^[45]

From all that we have stated in this chapter, it is evident that it is man's duty to aim at performing acts that observe the proper mean, and not to desist from them by going to one extreme or the other, except for the restoration of the soul's health by having recourse to the opposite of that from which the soul is suffering. So, just as he who, acquainted with the science of medicine, upon noting the least sign of a change for the worse in his health, does not remain indifferent to it, but prevents the sickness from increasing to a degree that will require recourse to violent remedies, and just as when a man, feeling that one of his limbs has become affected, carefully nurses it, refraining from things that are injurious to it, and applying every remedy that will restore it to its healthy condition, or at least keep it from getting worse, likewise, the moral man will constantly examine his characteristics, weigh his deeds, and daily investigate his psychic condition; and if, at any time, he finds his soul deviating to one extreme or another, he will immediately hasten to apply the proper remedy, and not suffer an evil aptitude to acquire strength, as we have shown, by a constant repetition of that evil action which it occasioned. He is, likewise, bound to be mindful of his defects, and constantly to endeavor to remedy them, as we have said above, for it is impossible for any man to be free from all faults.^[46] Philosophers tell us that it is most difficult and rare to find a man who, by his nature, is endowed with every perfection, moral as well as mental.^[47] This thought is expressed often in the prophetic books, as, "Behold in his servants he putteth no trust, and his angels he chargeth with folly",^[48] "How can man be justified with God? or how can be pure one that is born of woman?"^[49], and Solomon says of mankind in general, "For no man is so righteous upon earth that he should do always good, and never sin".^[50]

Thou knowest, also, that God said to our teacher Moses, the master of former and later ages, "Because ye have not confided in me, to sanctify me"^[51], "because ye rebelled against my order at the waters of Meribah"^[52], "because ye did not sanctify me".^[53] All this (God said) although the sin of Moses consisted merely in that he departed from the moral mean of patience to the extreme of wrath in so far as he exclaimed, "Hear now ye rebels"^[54] etc., yet for this God found fault with him that such a man as he should show anger in the presence of the entire community of Israel, where wrath is unbecoming. This was a profanation of God's name, because men imitated the words and conduct of Moses, hoping thereby to attain temporal and eternal happiness. How could he, then, allow his wrath free play, since it is a pernicious characteristic, arising, as we have shown, from an evil psychic condition? The divine words, "Ye (Israel) have rebelled against me" are, however, to be explained as follows. Moses was not speaking to ignorant and vicious people, but to an assembly, the most insignificant of whose women, as the sages put it, were on a plane with Ezekiel, the son of Buzi.^[55] So, when Moses said or did

anything, they subjected his words or actions to the most searching examination.^[56] Therefore, when they saw that he waxed wrathful, they said, "He has no moral imperfection, and did he not know that God is angry with us for demanding water, and that we have stirred up the wrath of God, he would not have been angry with us". However, we do not find that when God spoke to Moses about this matter He was angry, but on the contrary, said, "Take the staff ... and give drink to the congregation and their cattle".^[57]

We have, indeed, digressed from the subject of this chapter, but have, I hope, satisfactorily solved one of the most difficult passages of Scripture concerning which there has been much arguing in the attempt to state exactly what the sin was which Moses committed. Let what others have said be compared with our opinion, and the truth will surely prevail.

Now, let me return to my subject. If a man will always carefully discriminate as regards his actions, directing them to the medium course, he will reach the highest degree of perfection possible to a human being, thereby approaching God,^[58] and sharing in His happiness. This is the most acceptable way of serving God which the sages, too, had in mind when they wrote the words, "He who ordereth his course aright is worthy of seeing the salvation of God, as it is said, 'to him that ordereth his course aright will I show, will I show the salvation of God!'"^[59] Do not read *wesam* but *wesham derek*".^[60] *Shumah* means "weighing" and "valuation". This is exactly the idea which we have explained in this chapter.

This is all we think necessary to be said on this subject.

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1. ↑ To this chapter, in which the Aristotelian doctrine of the *Mean* (Μεσότης, balance) is applied to Jewish ethics, M. later supplemented *H. Deot*, I, 1—7; II, 2, 3, 7; and III, 1. Cf. *Eth. Nic.* II, 5—9; III, 8—14; IV. Although M. follows Aristotle in defining virtue as a state intermediate between two extremes, the *too little* and the *too much*, he still remains on Jewish ground, as there are biblical and Talmudical passages expressing such a thought. Such passages are Prov. IV, 26, "Balance well the track of thy foot, and let all thy ways be firmly right"; *ibid.*, XXX, 8, "Neither poverty nor riches give thou unto me"; Eccles. VII, 16, "Be not righteous overmuch; neither show thyself overwise" (quoted in *H. Deot*, III, 1); etc. In *Moreh*, I, 32, M. interprets "neither show thyself overwise" and "To eat too much honey is not good" (Prov. XXV, 27) as a warning against attempting to exceed the limits of one's intellectual powers, and as an admonition to keep knowledge within bounds. In the Palestinian Talmud (*Hagigah*, II, 77 a *bot.*), there is found an interesting passage which sums up well the thought of this chapter, and it is curious that M. did not refer to it. It reads, "The ways of the Torah may be likened to two roads, on one of which fire and on the other snow is encountered. If one go along one path, he will be burned to death, and if he proceed along the other, he will perish in the snow. What, then, should one do? He must go between the extremes." A similar passage is found in *Tosefta Hagigah* 2 (cf. *Yer. Hagigah*, p. 20), "They make it incumbent upon man to go between the extremes, and not to incline to this side or to that." See, also, *Soṭah*, 5a, "he (the scholar) in whom there is pride deserves excommunication, and also he in whom there is no pride at

all." For a discussion of Aristotle's doctrine of the Μεσότης, see Grant, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, vol. I, pp. 251—262. For that of M., see Jaraczewski, *ZPhKr*, XLVI, pp. 11—12; Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 26, n. 1; p. 79 ff.; Lazarus, *Ethik*, vol. I, *Abhang XIV* (Eng. ed. vol. I, p. 273 f.); Wolff, *Acht Capitel*, Introd., pp. XIII—XIV; Yellin and Abrahams, *Maimonides*, pp. 78—83; Cohen, *Charakteristik*, etc., in Moses ben Maimon, I, p. III ff.; A. Löwenthal in *JE.*, II, p. 101; Lewis, in *Aspects of the Hebrew Genius*, (London, 1910) pp. 82—83. On the mean in Jewish religious philosophy, see Rosin, *Ethik*, pp. 10, 12, 14, 19, 24; H. Malter, *JQR* (new series) vol. I, p. 160, n. 15.

2. ↑ השוים, *the equidistant* (equivalent to the Aristotelian ἴσον, *the exactly equal, the normal, or equibalanced*); cf. *Moreh*, II, 39, "It is clear, then, that the Law is normal (משוויה) in this sense; for it contains the words, 'Just statutes and judgments' (Deut. IV, 8); but 'just' is here identical with 'equibalanced' (שוים)."
3. ↑ הממוצעים, *the mean* (Aristotelian μέσον). *Nic. Eth.*, II, 6, "By an objective mean, I understand that which is equidistant from the two given extremes, and which is one and the same to all, and by a mean relatively to the person, I understand that which is neither too much nor too little."
4. ↑ Cf. *ibid.*, "Virtue, then, is a disposition of the moral purpose in relative balance, which is determined by a standard, according as the thoughtful man would determine. It is a middle state between two faulty ones, in the way of excess on one side, and defect on the other; and it is so, moreover, because the faulty states on one side fall short of, and those on the other side exceed, what is right, both in the case of the emotions and the actions; but virtue finds, and, when found, adopts the mean." Cf. *H. Deot.*, I, 4, and II, 2.
5. ↑ הקצה הראשון, *is the extreme of excess* (Aristotle's ὑπερβολή), and הקצה האחרון *the extreme of deficiency* (ἐλλειψις). Cf. *H. Deot.*, I, 5; III, 1; ואתרחק לצד האחרון עד שלא יאכל בשר ולא ישתה יין וכ', where צד האחרון clearly means the extreme of the *too little*.
6. ↑ See Hebrew text, c. IV, pp. 19—20, n. 17. On the gloss והגחת ממוצעת וכ', introduced here in some Mss. and edd., see Hebrew text, c. IV, p. 20, note. This gloss seems to go back to *Eth. Nic.*, II, 7, "He that is as he should be may be called friendly, and his mean state friendliness; he that exceeds, if it be without any interested motive, somewhat too complaisant, if with such motive, a flatterer; he that is deficient and in all instances unpleasant, quarrelsome and cross."
7. ↑ The virtue which I. T. explains here, owing to the inadequacy of the Hebrew terms, is the one which Aristotle calls *magnificence* (I. T.'s טוב לב). The excess is *want of taste or vulgar profusion* (יתרון טוב הלבב), and the defect *paltriness* (הגבלה). See *Eth. Nic.*, *loc. cit.* According to Aristotle, *magnificence* is a higher kind of liberality (גדיבות), and consists of the spending of money on a grand scale, with taste and propriety. It is prompted by a desire for what is noble, concerning itself with the services of religion, public works, and so forth. The vulgar man, whose object is ostentation, offends with excessive splendor, while the mean man, on the

other hand, through timidity and constant fear of expense, even though he does expend large amounts, mars the whole effect by some petty characteristic of meanness (*ibid.*, IV, 2). I. T. has, accordingly, incorrectly explained the terms **יִתְרוֹן טוֹב הַלֵּבב**, **גְּבִלָה**, **לֵב מוֹב**.

8. ↑ See *H. Deot*, I, and II for a list and discussion of the virtues. Aristotle mentions and discusses the following virtues in *Eth. Nic.*: courage (II, 7, and III, 6-9), perfected self-mastery or temperance (II, 7, and III, 10-11), liberality (II, 7, and IV, 1), magnificence (II, 7 and IV, 2), greatness of soul (II, 7, and IV, 3), love of honor (II, 7, and IV, 4), gentleness (II, 7, and IV, 5), friendliness (II, 7, and IV, 6), truthfulness (II, 7, and IV, 7), jocularity or liveliness (II, 7, and IV, 8), and modesty (II, 7, and IV, 9). Cf., also, *Eudemian Ethics*, II, 3, where a formal table is given containing fourteen virtues and their respective pairs of extremes; and *Mag. Mor.* I, 20 ff.
9. ↑ *Abot*, II, 5.
10. ↑ *Abot*, V, 20.
11. ↑ See Hebrew text, c. IV, p. 21, n. 16.
12. ↑ Aristotle also mentions the paucity of terms to express the nice distinctions he makes (*Eth. Nic.*, II, 7).
13. ↑ Better, "the apathetic"; see Hebrew text, c. IV, p. 21, n. 27.
14. ↑ Cf. *Eth. Nic.*, II, 9, "for we ourselves sometimes praise those who are defective in this feeling (anger), and we call them gentle; at another, we term the hot-tempered manly and spirited."
15. ↑ Cf. *Yoma*, 86 b; *Sotah*, 22a, "As soon as a man has committed a sin and repeated it, it becomes to him a permitted act".
16. ↑ Cf. *H. Deot*, "VI, 1, "The natural disposition of the human mind occasions man to be influenced in his opinions and actions by those with whom he associates, and his conduct to be dependent on that of his friends and countrymen".
17. ↑ On the acquisition of virtues and vices, see *Eth. Nic.*, II, 1—3; and *H. Deot*, I, 2, 7. See below c. VIII, p. 85ff.
18. ↑ Cf. *Eth. Nic.*, II, 2, "for excessive training impairs the strength as well as deficient; meat and drink, in like manner, in too great or too small quantities, impair the health; while in due proportion they cause increase, and preserve it".
19. ↑ Cf. *H. Deot*, II, 2. The same thought is expressed by Aristotle in *Eth. Nic.*, II, 9. If we find ourselves at one of the faulty extremes, we must drag ourselves away in the opposite direction, for by bending ourselves a long way back from the erroneous extreme, allowing for the recoil, as when one straightens a crooked piece of timber, we shall at length arrive at the proper mean. Punishment of sin also, according to M., forces the culprit to the other extreme of the sin committed. Thus, if a man sin as regards property, he must spend his money liberally in the service of God; if he has indulged in sinful bodily enjoyments, he must chastise his body with fasting, privation, and the like. This practice should even extend itself to man's intellectual failings, which may cause him to believe some false doctrine, a fault that is to be remedied by turning one's thoughts entirely away from wordly affairs, and devoting them exclusively to intellectual exercises, and carefully reflecting upon those beliefs in which he should have faith (*Moreh*, III, 46). Compare with this Aristotle's theory as regards correction, according to which the remedies are of such a nature as to be the contraries of the ills they seek to cure (*Eth. Nic.*, II, 2).
20. ↑ Cf. *H. Deot*, II, 2, "How shall he cure them (the moral ills)? The sages tell the wrathful man that if he is accustomed to scold and curse he should train

himself never to give vent to these feelings, and that he should continue this course a long while, until he has eradicated wrath from his heart. If he is haughty let him train himself to be humble, let him clothe himself in ragged garments which humiliate those who wear them, and let him do similar acts, until he has uprooted his pride, and returned to the middle course which is the moral one; and, when he has done so, let him continue in it all his days. He should act in a similar way with all his characteristics. If he is far from the middle course, at one extreme, let him force himself to go to the other, and accustom himself fully to it, until he returns to the proper course, which is the medial trait as regards each characteristic”.

21. ↑ See *infra*, c. VI; and M.'s *Commentary on Abot*, V, 7. 11.

22. ↑ M. departs from strict adherence to the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean, which Aristotle himself does, at times, and especially as regards the virtue of justice. M. states here that the deviation from the mean on the part of the saints was because of caution and restraint. Later, in *H. Deot*, I, 5, he

expands this thought in drawing a distinction between the wise man (חכם) and the saint (חסיד).

Wise men cling to the exact middle course, but “the early saints were accustomed to deviate in their characteristics from the middle course towards either one or the other extreme, now making one characteristic tend towards the extreme of deficiency, and now another towards that of excess. This is doing ‘more than the strict letter of the law demands’.” In regard to the two characteristics, pride and anger, M. states, in some instances, the Aristotelian view which considers the medium course the virtue, only to depart from it at other times, and, following the Bible and

Talmud, considers the extreme the virtue. Thus, in this chapter, pride (גאווה)

is the one extreme, self-abasement (שפלות הרוח) the other, and humility

(ענווה), the mean, is the virtue; anger (כעס) is the excess, insensibility to

shame and disgrace (העדר הרגשה חרפה ובוז) the deficiency, and

mildness (סבלנות), the mean, is the virtue. In *H. Deot*, I, 4, the medium

course (בינוני), likewise, in respect to anger, is designated as the virtue.

Man should not be insensible to anger (ולא כמת שאינו מרגיש), although

he should give vent to his wrath only at great provocation (ולא יכעוס אלא

על דבר גדול). In his *Commentary on Abot*, IV, 4 (Rawicz, *Commentar*, pp.

78—80), and in *H. Deot*, II, 3, M. asserts, however, that excessive humility and complete absence of anger are the virtues, and not the medium course.

The passage in *Deot* is as follows, “There are, however, some dispositions in regard to which it is wrong to pursue even a middle course, but the contrary extreme is to be embraced, as, for instance, in respect to pride. One does not follow the proper path by merely being humble. Man should be very humble and extremely meek. To this end, Scripture says of Moses, our master, that he was ‘very humble’ (Num. XII, 3), and not that he was simply humble.

Therefore, the sages command us, ‘Be thou very humble’ (*Abot*, IV, 4), and say, furthermore, that all who are proud-hearted deny an important principle of our faith, for Scripture says, ‘Thy heart will become uplifted, and thou wilt forget the Lord thy God’ (*Deut.* VIII, 14), and they also say, ‘he who is presumptuous, even to a slight degree deserves excommunication’. In like manner, anger is a very bad characteristic; one should go to the opposite extreme and school himself to be without wrath, even as regards a matter at

which it might seem proper to show anger..... The Rabbis of old said, 'Whoever allows himself to be carried away by his wrath is like a worshipper of idols' (*Nedarim*, 22a). Furthermore, they said, 'If a wise man becomes angry, his wisdom forsakes him; if a prophet, his inspiration departs from him' (*Pesahim*, 66b), and, 'Those that abandon themselves to their angry passions do not deserve to live' (*Pesahim* 113b). Therefore, they recommend total absence of anger, so that a man may thus train himself never to feel it, even at those things which naturally would provoke one to wrath. The proper course to pursue, and the way of the righteous, is that 'they are insulted, but do not insult; they hear themselves reviled, and answer not; they do good from pure motives of love; they rejoice amidst their sufferings, and of them it is said, 'Those that love him are like the sun going forth in its might' (Judges V, 31, *Shabbat*, 38b)". See Rosin, *Ethih*, p. 87, n. 5; Cohen, *Charakteristik*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, pp. 112—116. See, however, *supra*, p. 54, note 1, for biblical and Talmudical passages which support the doctrine of the medium course.

23. ↑ *Baba Mezī'a*, 35a: עשית הישר והטוב זו לפנים משורת הדין.

24. ↑ To study *Torah*.

25. ↑ Cf. *H. Deot*, VI, 1, and *H. Nedarim*, XIII, 23.

26. ↑ Jer. IX, 1.

27. ↑ Ps. XIX, 9.

28. ↑ Num. VI, 11.

29. ↑ *Nazir*, 19a, 22a; *Ta'anit*, 11a; *Baba Kamma*, 91b; *Nedarim*, 10a; cf. M.'s *Commentary on Abot*, V, 15.

30. ↑ Zech. VII, 3.

31. ↑ *Ibid.*, VII, 6.

32. ↑ *Ibid.*, VII, 9.

33. ↑ *Ibid.*, VIII, 9.

34. ↑ Cf. *Moreh*, III, 35, and *H. Deot*, III.

35. ↑ Cf. *Moreh*, III, 39.

36. ↑ Lev. XIX, 18.

37. ↑ Ex. XXIII, 5.

38. ↑ Deut. XXII, 4.

39. ↑ *Ibid.*, XXII, 1.

40. ↑ Lev. XIX, 32.

41. ↑ Ex. XX, 12.

42. ↑ Deut. XVII, 11.

43. ↑ Lev. XIX, 17.

44. ↑ Deut. XVIII, 22.

45. ↑ *Yer. Nedarim*, IX, 1; ed. Krotoschin, 41b: אלא שאתה מבקש לאסור עליך.

46. ↑ Cf. *Moreh*, III, 36.

47. ↑ Cf. M.'s *Commentary on Abot*, V, 14 (Rawicz, *Commentar*, p. 100). See *Eth. Nic.*, VII, 1, "it is a rare thing for a man to be godlike".

48. ↑ Job IV, 18.

49. ↑ *Ibid.*, XXV, 4.

50. ↑ Eccl. VII, 20.

51. ↑ Num. XX, 12.

52. ↑ *Ibid.*, XX, 24.

53. ↑ Deut. XXXII, 51.

- 54. ↑ Num. XX, 10.
- 55. ↑ *Mekilta* to **בשלח** (Ex. XV, 2).
- 56. ↑ See *Moreh*, I, 4, on the interpretation of Ex. XXIII, 8.
- 57. ↑ Num. XX, 8.
- 58. ↑ See below, c. VII, n. 5a. On nearness to God (**התקרבות**), see Cohen, *Charakteristik*, etc., in *Moses b. Maimon*, vol. I, pp. 106, and 124.
- 59. ↑ Ps. L, 23.
- 60. ↑ *Sotah*, 5b; *Mo'ed Qatan*, 5a.

CHAPTER V

CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF MAN'S PSYCHIC FACULTIES TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF A SINGLE GOAL^[1]

As we have explained in the preceding chapter, it is the duty of man to subordinate all the faculties of his soul to his reason. He must keep his mind's eye fixed constantly upon one goal, namely, the attainment of the knowledge of God^[2] (may He be blessed!), as far as it is possible for mortal man to know Him. Consequently, one must so adjust all his actions, his whole conduct, and even his very words, that they lead to this goal, in order that none of his deeds be aimless, and thus retard the attainment of that end. So, his only design in eating, drinking, cohabiting, sleeping, waking, moving about, and resting should be the preservation of bodily health, while, in turn, the reason for the latter is that the soul and its agencies may be in sound and perfect condition, so that he may readily acquire wisdom, and gain moral and intellectual virtues, all to the end that man may reach the highest goal of his endeavors.

Accordingly, man will not direct his attention merely to obtain bodily enjoyment, choosing of food and drink and the other things of life only the agreeable, but he will seek out the most useful, being indifferent whether it be agreeable or not. There are, indeed, times when the agreeable may be used from a curative point of view, as, for instance, when one suffers from loss of appetite, it may be stirred up by highly seasoned delicacies and agreeable, palatable food. Similarly, one who suffers from melancholia may rid himself of it by listening to singing and all kinds of instrumental music, by strolling through beautiful gardens and splendid buildings, by gazing upon beautiful pictures, and other things that enliven the mind, and dissipate gloomy moods. The purpose of all this is to restore the healthful condition of the body, but the real object in maintaining the body in good health is to acquire wisdom. Likewise, in the pursuit of wealth, the main design in its acquisition should be to expend it for noble purposes, and to employ it for the maintenance of the body and the preservation of life, so that its owner may obtain a knowledge of God, in so far as that is vouchsafed unto man.

From this point of view, the study of medicine has a very great influence upon the acquisition of the virtues and of the knowledge of God, as well as upon the attainment of true, spiritual happiness. Therefore, its study and acquisition are pre-eminently important religious activities, and must not be ranked in the same class with the art of weaving, or the science of architecture, for by it one learns to weigh one's deeds, and thereby human activities are rendered true virtues. The man who insists upon indulging in savory, sweet-smelling and palatable food although it be injurious, and possibly may lead to serious illness or sudden death ought, in my opinion, to be classed with the beasts. His conduct is not that of a man in so far as he is a being endowed with understanding, but it is rather the action of a man in so far as he is a member of the animal kingdom, and so "he is like the beasts who perish".^[3] Man acts like a human being only when he eats that which is wholesome, at times avoiding the agreeable, and partaking of the disagreeable in his search for the

beneficial. Such conduct is in accordance with the dictates of reason, and by these acts man is distinguished from all other beings. Similarly, if a man satisfy his sexual passions whenever he has the desire, regardless of good or ill effects, he acts as a brute, and not as a man.^[4]

It is possible, however, for one to shape one's conduct entirely from the point of view of utility, as we have stated, with no aim beyond that of maintaining the health of the body, or guarding against disease. Such a one does not deserve to be called virtuous, for, just as he strives for the enjoyment of good health, another like him may have as his aim the gratification of eating, or of sexual intercourse, none of which actions leads towards the true goal. The real duty of man is, that in adopting whatever measures he may for his well-being and the preservation of his existence in good health, he should do so with the object of maintaining a perfect condition of the instruments of the soul, which are the limbs of the body, so that his soul may be unhampered, and he may busy himself in acquiring the moral and mental virtues. So it is with all the sciences and knowledge man may learn. Concerning those which lead directly to this goal, there is naturally no question; but such subjects as mathematics, the study of conic sections,^[5] mechanics, the various problems of geometry,^[6] hydraulics, and many others of a similar nature, which do not tend directly towards that goal, should be studied for the purpose of sharpening the mind, and training the mental faculties by scientific investigations, so that man may acquire intellectual ability to distinguish demonstrative proofs from others, whereby he will be enabled to comprehend the essence of God. Similarly, in regard to man's conversation, he should speak only of those things that will be conducive to the true welfare of his soul and body, or that will tend to avert injury from them, whether his words concern themselves with science, or virtue, or praise of virtue or of a virtuous man, or with censure of vice or of a vicious person; for to express contempt for those who are loaded with vice, or to depict their deeds as contemptible—if done for the purpose of disparaging them in the eyes of other men who may avoid them, and not do as they do—is indeed a virtuous duty. Does not Scripture say, “After the doings of the land of Egypt ye shall not do, and after the doings of the land of Canaan”?^[7] Also, the story of the Sodomites and all the passages occurring in Scripture, which censure those laden with vice, and represent their doings as disgraceful, and those passages which praise and hold the good in high esteem, endeavor, as I have said, to induce man to follow the paths of the righteous, and to shun the way of the wicked.

If man has this as his ideal, he will dispense with many of his customary deeds, and refrain from a great deal of ordinary conversation.^[8] He who follows this line of conduct will not trouble himself with adorning his walls with golden ornaments, nor with decorating his garments with golden fringe, unless it be for the purpose of enlivening his soul, and thus restoring it to health, or of banishing sickness from it, so that it shall become clear and pure, and thus be in the proper condition to acquire wisdom. Therefore, our Rabbis of blessed memory say, “It is becoming that a sage should have a pleasant dwelling, a beautiful wife, and domestic comfort”;^[9] for one becomes weary, and one's

mind dulled by continued mental concentration upon difficult problems. Thus, just as the body becomes exhausted from hard labor, and then by rest and refreshment recovers, so is it necessary for the mind to have relaxation by gazing upon pictures and other beautiful objects, that its weariness may be dispelled. Accordingly, it is related that when the Rabbis became exhausted from study, they were accustomed to engage in entertaining conversation^[10] (in order to refresh themselves). From this point of view, therefore, the use of pictures and embroideries for beautifying the house, the furniture, and the clothes is not to be considered immoral nor unnecessary.

Know that to live according to this standard is to arrive at a very high degree of perfection, which, in consequence of the difficulty of attainment, only a few, after long and continuous perseverance on the paths of virtue, have succeeded in reaching. If there be found a man who has accomplished this—that is one who exerts all the faculties of his soul, and directs them towards the sole ideal of comprehending God, using all his powers of mind and body, be they great or small, for the attainment of that which leads directly or indirectly to virtue—I would place him in a rank not lower than that of the prophets. Such a man, before he does a single act or deed, considers and reflects whether or not it will bring him to that goal, and if it will, then, and then only, does he do it.

Such striving does the Almighty require of us, according to the words, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might”,^[11] that is, with all the faculties of thy soul, each faculty having as its sole ideal the love of God.^[12] The prophets, similarly, urge us on in saying, “In all thy ways know Him”,^[13] in commenting upon which the sages said, “even as regards a transgression (of the ritual or ceremonial law),”^[14] meaning thereby that thou shouldst set for every action a goal, namely, the truth, even though it be, from a certain point of view, a transgression.^[15] The sages of blessed memory, too, have summed up this idea in so few words and so concisely, at the same time elucidating the whole matter with such complete thoroughness, that when one considers the brevity with which they expressed this great and mighty thought in its entirety, about which others have written whole books and yet without adequately explaining it, one truly recognizes that the Rabbis undoubtedly spoke through divine inspiration. This saying is found among their precepts (in this tractate), and is, “Let all thy deeds be done for the sake of God”.^[16]

This, then, is the thought we have been dwelling upon in the present chapter, and what we have said must be considered sufficient for the needs of this introduction.^[17]

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1. [↑] For a discussion of the contents of this chapter, see Jaraczewski, *ZPhKr*, XLVI, pp. 2—13, and Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 105 ff.
 2. [↑] Cf. Ibn Daud, *Emunah Ramah*, III, and *Moreh*, III, 51. See I. Friedlaender, *Der Stil des Maimonides*, in *Moses b. Maimon*, I, p. 430.
 3. [↑] Ps. XLIX, 13.

4. [↑] Cf. *H. Deot*, III, 2, and *Moreh*, III, 8, "Those who desire to be men in truth, and not brutes, having only the appearance and shape of men, must constantly endeavor to reduce the wants of the body, such as eating, cohabiting, drinking, anger, and all vices originating in lust and passion."
5. [↑] See Wolff, *Acht Capitel*, p. 38, n. 1.
6. [↑] See Sachs, *Beiträge*, vol. II, p. 78; and Rawicz, *Commentar*, p. 22.
7. [↑] Lev. XVIII, 3.
8. [↑] See *H. Deot*, II, 4, and 5, for a further discussion of this subject.
9. [↑] *Shabbat*, 25b.
10. [↑] Cf. *ibid.*, 30b: **כִּי הָא דְרַבָּה מִקְמִי דְפִתַּח לֵהוּ לְרַבִּנָּן אָמַר מִילְתָּא דְבִדְיָחוּתָא וְכ'.**
11. [↑] Deut. VI, 5.
12. [↑] Cf. *Moreh*, I, 39 (end) which refers to this passage in the *Perakim*, and to the *Mishneh Torah* (*Yesode ha-Torah*, II, 2).
13. [↑] Prov. III, 6.
14. [↑] *Berakot*, 63a. This does not imply that the end justifies the means; that crime may be committed to bring about religious or charitable ends. It refers only to the violation of the ceremonial or ritual laws, as the breaking of the Sabbath, and eating on *Yom Kippur*, for the sake of saving life, etc. Cf. *Ketubot*, 5a, "You must remove debris to save a life on the Sabbath"; and *Shabbat*, 30b, "Better to extinguish the light on the Sabbath than to extinguish life, which is God's light", etc. The distinction in regard to the various kinds of transgressions which M. makes below, Chapter VI, pp. 76—78, applies here. See *Shemonah Perakim*, ed. Wolf, 1876, p. 53, n. 5.
15. [↑] Cf. M.'s *Commentary on Berakot*, IX, 5: **וּבְכָל לִבְבְּךָ בְּשֵׁנֵי יִצְרִיךָ** **בִּיצֵר הַטּוֹב וּבִיצֵר הָרָע**. Cf. also his *Commentary on Abot*, V, 20 (Rawicz, *Commentar*, p. 108), and *Moreh*, III, 22 (end).
16. [↑] *Abot*, II, 12.
17. [↑] That is, the *Shemonah Perakim*, which constitute M.'s introduction to his *Commentary on Abot*. See *Introduction*, p. 5.

H. Deot, III, 3 contains a summary of the contents of the latter part of this chapter.

CHAPTER VI

CONCERNING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SAINTLY [OR HIGHLY ETHICAL] MAN AND HIM WHO [SUBDUES HIS PASSIONS AND] HAS SELF-RESTRAINT^[1]

PHILOSOPHERS maintain that though the man of self-restraint performs moral and praiseworthy deeds, yet he does them desiring and craving all the while for immoral deeds, but, subduing his passions and actively fighting against a longing to do those things to which his faculties, his desires, and his psychic disposition excite him, succeeds, though with constant vexation and irritation, in acting morally. The saintly man, however, is guided in his actions by that to which his inclination and disposition prompt him, in consequence of which he acts morally from innate longing and desire. Philosophers unanimously agree that the latter is superior to, and more perfect than, the one who has to curb his passions, although they add that it is possible for such a one to equal the saintly man in many regards. In general, however, he must necessarily be ranked lower in the scale of virtue, because there lurks within him the desire to do evil, and, though he does not do it, yet because his inclinations are all in that direction, it denotes the presence of an immoral psychic disposition. Solomon, also, entertained the same idea when he said, "The soul of the wicked desireth evil",^[2] and, in regard to the saintly man's rejoicing in doing good, and the discontent experienced by him, who is not innately righteous, when required to act justly, he says, "It is bliss to the righteous to do justice, but torment to the evil-doer".^[3] This is manifestly an agreement between Scripture and philosophy.

When, however, we consult the Rabbis on this subject, it would seem that they consider him who desires iniquity, and craves for it (but does not do it), more praiseworthy and perfect than the one who feels no torment at refraining from evil; and they even go so far as to maintain that the more praiseworthy and perfect a man is, the greater is his desire to commit iniquity, and the more irritation does he feel at having to desist from it. This they express by saying, "Whosoever is greater than his neighbor has likewise greater evil inclinations".^[4] Again, as if this were not sufficient, they even go so far as to say that the reward of him who overcomes his evil inclination is commensurate with the torture occasioned by his resistance, which thought they express by the words, "According to the labor is the reward".^[5] Furthermore, they command that man should conquer his desires, but they forbid one to say, "I, by my nature, do not desire to commit such and such a transgression, even though the Law does not forbid it". Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel summed up this thought in the words, "Man should not say, 'I do not want to eat meat together with milk; I do not want to wear clothes made of a mixture of wool and linen; I do not want to enter into an incestuous marriage', but he should say, 'I do indeed want to, yet I must not, for my father in Heaven has forbidden it'".^[6]

At first blush, by a superficial comparison of the sayings of the philosophers and the Rabbis, one might be inclined to say that they contradict one another. Such, however, is not the case. Both are correct and, moreover, are not in

disagreement in the least, as the evils which the philosophers term such—and of which they say that he who has no longing for them is more to be praised than he who desires them but conquers his passion—are things which all people commonly agree are evils, such as the shedding of blood, theft, robbery, fraud, injury to one who has done no harm, ingratitude, contempt for parents, and the like. The prescriptions against these are

called *commandments* (מצוות), about which the Rabbis said, “If they had not already been written in the Law, it would be proper to add them”.^[7] Some of our later sages, who were infected with the unsound principles of the *Mutakallimun*,^[8] called these *rational laws*.^[9] There is no doubt that a soul which has the desire for, and lusts after, the above-mentioned misdeeds, is imperfect, that a noble soul has absolutely no desire for any such crimes, and experiences no struggle in refraining from them. When, however, the Rabbis maintain that he who overcomes his desire has more merit and a greater reward (than he who has no temptation), they say so only in reference to laws that are ceremonial prohibitions. This is quite true, since, were it not for the Law, they would not at all be considered transgressions. Therefore, the Rabbis say that man should permit his soul to entertain the natural inclination for these things, but that the Law alone should restrain him from them. Ponder over the wisdom of these men of blessed memory manifest in the examples they adduce. They do not declare, “Man should not say, ‘I have no desire to kill, to steal and to lie, but I have a desire for these things, yet what can I do, since my Father in heaven forbids it!’” The instances they cite are all from the ceremonial law, such as partaking of meat and milk together, wearing clothes made of wool and linen, and entering into consanguineous marriages.^[10] These, and similar enactments are what God called “my statutes” (חקותי), which, as the Rabbis say are “statutes which I (God) have enacted for thee, which thou hast no right to subject to criticism, which the nations of the world attack and which Satan denounces, as for instance, the statutes concerning the red heifer, the scapegoat, and so forth”.^[11] Those transgressions, however, which the later sages called *rational laws* are termed *commandments* (מצוות), as the Rabbis explained.^[12]

It is now evident from all that we have said, what the transgressions are for which, if a man have no desire at all, he is on a higher plane than he who has a longing, but controls his passion for them; and it is also evident what the transgressions are of which the opposite is true. It is an astonishing fact that these two classes of expressions should be shown to be compatible with one another, but their content points to the truth of our explanation.

This ends the discussion of the subject-matter of this chapter.

1. [↑] On the contents of this chapter, see Jaraczewski, *ZPhKr*, XLVI, pp. 13—14, and Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 92ff. See Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic*

Theology, p. 201 if., on *Hasidut* (Saintliness). Cf. *Eth., Nic.*, VII, on *Self-control*.

2. ↑ Prov. XXI, 10.
3. ↑ Prov. XXI, 15.
4. ↑ *Sukkah*, 52a. See Lazarus, *Ethics*, II, pp. 106—107.
5. ↑ *Abot*, V, 23.
6. ↑ *Sifra* to Lev. XX, 26, and *Midrash Yalkuṭ to Wayikra*, 226, although referred to as the words of R. Eleazar b. Azariah.
7. ↑ *Yoma*, 67b. See *infra*, p. 78, n. 2.
8. ↑ See *supra*, p. 41, and n. 2; *infra*, p. 90.
9. ↑ M. refers especially to Saadia who, in *Emunot we-De'ot*, III, 2, divides the divine commandments into rational (מצוות שכליות), and revealed laws (מצוות שמיעות). See Scheyer, *Psychol. Syst. d. Maim.*, pp. 24 and 106; Kaufmann, *Attributenlehre*, p. 503; Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 93, n. 5; Schreiner, *Der Kalām*, etc., pp. 13-14; Wolff, *Acht Capitel*, p. 45, n. 1; Goldziher, *Kitāb māānī al-Nafs*, Berlin 1907, p. 22*f., and text p. 17, n. 6; and Cohen, *Charakteristik*, etc., in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, p. 77 ff. M. refers also to Saadia in *Moreh*, I, 71: ומה שנתגלה מזה הענין לקצת הגאונים, ואצל הקראים, הם: ענינים לקחום מן המדברים מן הישמעאלים. See Munk, *Guide*, I, p. 336, n. 1. On Saadia's relation to the *Kalām*, see Kaufmann, *Ibid.*, p. 3, n. 5, *et al.*
10. ↑ See Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 94, n. 4.
11. ↑ *Yoma*, 67b: תנו רבנן את משפטי תעשו דברים שאלמלא לא נכתבו דין הוא שיכתבו ואלו הן עבודה זרה וגלוי עריות ושפכות דמים וגזל וברכת השם [ו]את חקתי תשמרו דברים שהשטן משיב עליהן ואלו הן אכילת חזיר ולבישת שעטנז וחליצת יבמה וטהרת מצורע ושעיר המשתלח ושמא תאמר מעשה תהו הם תלמוד לומר אני ה' אני ה' חקקתיו ואין לך רשות להרהר בהן.
12. ↑ Cf. *Eth. Nic.*, V, 10, where the “just” is spoken of as of two kinds, the natural and the conventional, the former corresponding to “commandments” (חקים), and the latter to “statutes” (חוקים). The former, says Aristotle, have everywhere the same force, while the latter may be this way or that way indifferently, except after enactment, being, in short, all matters of special decree, such as, for instance, the price of a ransom being fixed at a *mina*, or sacrificing a goat instead of two sheep, etc.

M. discusses the nature of the commandments in *Moreh*, III, 26. He makes, as here, a distinction between commandments whose object is generally evident, such as the prohibition of murder, theft, etc., and those whose object is not generally clear, such as the prohibition of wearing garments of wool and linen, boiling milk and meat together, etc. The former he calls *judgments* (משפטים, termed מצוות here), and the latter he designates *statutes* or *ordinances* (חוקים). See Scheyer, *Dalalat al Haiirin*, Part III (Frankfurt am Main, 1838), p. 178, n. 2; and Lazurus, *Ethics*, I, pp. 118—119.

CHAPTER VII

CONCERNING THE BARRIER (BETWEEN GOD AND MAN) AND ITS SIGNIFICATION^[1]

MANY passages are found in the *Midrash*, the *Haggadah*, and also the *Talmud*, which state that some of the prophets beheld God from behind many barriers, and some from behind only a few, according to the proximity of the prophet to Him, and the degree of his prophetic power.^[2] Consequently, the Rabbis said that Moses, our teacher, saw God from behind a single, clear, that is transparent, partition. As they express it, "He (Moses) looked through a translucent *specularia*".^[3] *Specularia* is the name of a mirror made of some transparent body like crystal or glass, as is explained at the end of *Tractate Kelim*.^[4]

Let me now explain the above statement. In accordance with what we have made clear in Chapter II, virtues are either intellectual or moral. Similarly, vices are intellectual, as ignorance, stupidity, and want of understanding; or they are moral as inordinate lust, pride, irascibility, anger, impudence, avarice, and many other similar defects, a list of which we have given and explained in Chapter IV. Each of these defects is as a partition separating man from God, the Most High. This is what the prophet meant when he said, "But your iniquities have ever made a separation between you and your God";^[5] which means that our sins—which, as we have said, are the evil qualities—are the partitions which separate us from God.^[6]

Know, then, that no prophet received the gift of prophecy, unless he possessed all the mental virtues and a great majority of the most important moral ones. So, the Rabbis said, "Prophecy rests only upon the wise, the brave, and the rich".^[7] By the word "wise", they undoubtedly refer to all the mental perfections. By "rich", they designate the moral perfection of contentment, for they call the contented man rich, their definition of the word "rich" being, "Who is rich? He who is contented with his lot",^[8] that is, one who is satisfied with what fortune brings him, and who does not grieve on account of things which he does not possess. Likewise, "brave" stands for a moral perfection; that is, one who is brave guides his faculties in accordance with intelligence and reason, as we have shown in Chapter V. The Rabbis say, "Who is brave? He who subdues his passions".^[9] It is not, however, an indispensable requirement that a prophet should possess all the moral virtues, and be entirely free from every defect, for we find that Scripture testifies in reference to Solomon, who was a prophet, that "the Lord appeared to Solomon in Gibeon",^[10] although we know that he had the moral defect of lust, which is plainly evident from the fact that he took so many wives, a vice springing from the disposition of passion which resided in his soul. It plainly says, "Did not Solomon sin by these things?"^[11] Even David—a prophet, according to the words, "To me spoke the Rock of Israel"^[12]—we find guilty of cruelty, and, although he exercised it only against the heathens, and in the destruction of non-believers, being merciful towards Israel, it is explicitly stated in Chronicles that God, considering him unworthy, did not permit him to build the Temple, as

it was not fitting in His eyes, because of the many people David caused to be killed. So, God said to him, "Thou shalt not build a house to my name, because much blood hast thou shed".^[13] We find, also, that Elijah gave vent to his anger, and although he did so only against unbelievers, against whom his wrath blazed up, the sages declared that God took him from the world, saying to him, "He who has so much zeal as thou hast is not fit to guide men, for thou wilt destroy them".^[14] Likewise, we find that Samuel feared Saul, and that Jacob was afraid to meet Esau. These and similar characteristics were so many partitions between the prophets (peace be unto them!) and God. He of them who had two or three qualities which did not maintain the proper medium, as is explained in Chapter IV, is said to have seen God from behind two or three partitions.

Thou must not be surprised to learn, however, that a few moral imperfections lessen the degree of prophetic inspiration; in fact, we find that some moral vices cause prophecy to be entirely withdrawn. Thus, for instance, wrath may do this, as our Rabbis say, "If a prophet becomes enraged, the spirit of prophecy departs from him".^[15] They adduce proof for this from the case of Elisha, from whom, when he became enraged, prophecy departed, until his wrath had subsided, at which he exclaimed, "And now bring me a musician!"^[16]

Grief and anxiety may also cause a cessation of prophecy, as in the case of the patriarch Jacob who, during the days when he mourned for Joseph, was deprived of the Holy Spirit, until he received the news that his son lived, whereupon Scripture says, "The spirit of Jacob, their father, revived",^[17] which the *Targum*^[18] renders, "And the spirit of prophecy descended upon their father, Jacob". The sages, moreover, say, "The spirit of prophecy rests not upon the idle, nor upon the sad, but upon the joyous".^[19]

When Moses, our teacher, discovered that there remained no partition between himself and God which he had not removed, and when he had attained perfection by acquiring every possible moral and mental virtue, he sought to comprehend God in His true reality, since there seemed no longer to be any hindrance thereto. He, therefore, implored of God, "Show me, I beseech Thee, Thy glory".^[20] But God informed him that this was impossible, as his intellect, since he was a human being, was still influenced by matter. So, God's answer was, "For no man can see me and live".^[21] Thus, there remained between Moses and his comprehension of the true essence of God only one transparent obstruction, which was his human intellect still resident in matter. God, however, was gracious in imparting to him, after his request, more knowledge of the divine than he had previously possessed, informing him that the goal (he sought) was impossible of attainment, because he was yet a human being.^[22] The true comprehension of God, Moses designates by the term "beholding the Divine face", for, when one sees another person face to face his features become imprinted upon the mind, so that one will not confuse him whom he has seen with others; whereas, if he sees only his back, he may possibly recognize him again, but will more probably be in doubt, and confuse him with others. Likewise, the true comprehension of God is a

conception of the reality of His existence fixed in the mind (of the knower) which, as concerns this existence, is a conception not shared by any other being; so that there is firmly implanted in the mind of the knower a knowledge of God's existence absolutely distinct from the knowledge the mind has of any other being (that exists). It is impossible, however, for mortal man to attain this high degree of comprehension, though Moses (peace be unto him) almost, but not quite, reached it, which thought is expressed by the words, "Thou shalt see my back parts".^[23] I intend more fully to discuss this subject in my *Book on Prophecy*.^[24]

So, since the sages (peace be unto them) knew that these two classes of vices, that is, the mental and the moral, separated man from God, and that according to them the rank of the prophets varied, they (the Rabbis) said of some of their own number, with whose wisdom and morality they were acquainted, "It is fitting that the spirit of God should rest upon them as it did upon Moses, our teacher".^[25] Do not, however, mistake the intention of the comparison. They did, indeed, compare them with Moses, for they were far (God forbid!) from giving them equal rank. In the same way they speak of others, characterizing them as being "like Joshua".

This is what we intended to explain in this chapter.

1. [↑] For a discussion of the contents of this chapter, see Jaraczewski, *ZPhKr*, XLVI, pp. 14—15; Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 113ff., and Graetz (Eng. ed.), vol. III, pp. 483—484 on M.'s views on prophecy.
2. [↑] For a detailed discussion of prophecy, see Moreh, II, 32-48. See *supra*, c. I, p. 45, n. 3. See also Bloch, *Charakteristik und Inhaltsangabe des Moreh Nebuchim*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, pp. 35—39.
3. [↑] *Yebamot*, 49b: כל הנביאים נסתכלו באספקלריא שאינה מאירה, משה רבינו נסתכל באספקלריא המאירה. Cf. also *Leviticus Rabbah*, I. In *Perek Helek*, M. describes the four points in which the prophecy of Moses was distinguished from that of the other prophets. See Holzer, *Dogmenlehre*, pp. 24—25. Cf. also *Mishneh Torah*, *Sefer Madda*, I, 7, 6; *Moreh*, I, *Introduction* (beg.), and II, 35.
4. [↑] The passage in his commentary on *Kelim*, XXX, 2 to which M. refers is as follows: אספקלריא היא המכסה אשר יעשה לראות מאחוריו והוא אצלי מלה מורכבת ספק ראייה וזה שיראה אחורי המכסה שהוא מזכוכית או מן בלאר או מן דבר ספירי לא יראה במקומו האמתי וכן לא יראה על שיעורו האמתי ויקראו החכמים המכסה הבהיר מאד אשר לא יסתיר דבר מאחוריו אספקלריא המאירה ואמר על צד המשל בהשגת מרע"ה לאלהות שהוא השיג הבורא יתברך על תכלית מה שאפשר האדם מאשר הוא בחמר ההשגה ששיגהו כמו שאמר יתברך מזה כי לא יראני האדם וחי. *Specularia* (Lat.) = windowpanes, a window. Job 28,17, זְכוּכִית, glass = אֶסְפֶּקְלָרָא (*Targum*). Cf. *Sukkah*, 45b; *Gen. Rabbah*, sect. 91; etc.

5. [↑](#) Isa. LIX, 2.
6. [↑](#) On man's nearness to God being determined by the conduct of man, and God's removal from the earth by sin, see Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, pp. 33, 83, 232–3, 241.
7. [↑](#) *Nedarim*, 38a; *Shabbat*, 92a: אין השכינה שורה אלא על חכם גבור ועשיר ובעל קומה. Cf. *Moreh*, II, 32.
8. [↑](#) *Abot*, IV, 1.
9. [↑](#) *Ibid.*, IV, 1. See, also, *Yesode ha-Torah*, VII, 1, for an account of the characteristics necessary for a prophet. Cf. *Moreh*, II, 36, and III, 51, where M. briefly describes those who form the class of prophets as directing all their minds to the attainment of perfection in metaphysics, devoting themselves entirely to God, and employing all their intellectual faculties in the study of the universe, in order to derive a proof for the existence of God, and to learn in every way possible how God rules things.
10. [↑](#) I K. III, 5.
11. [↑](#) *Neh.* XIII, 26.
12. [↑](#) II *Sam.* XXIII, 3.
13. [↑](#) I *Ch.* XXII, 8.
14. [↑](#) *Sanhedrin*, 113a.
15. [↑](#) *Pesahim* 66 b. Cf. *Moreh*, II, 36 (end)
16. [↑](#) II K. III, 15. See *Pesahim* 117 a.
17. [↑](#) *Gen.* XLV, 27.
18. [↑](#) M. attached a great deal of importance to the *Targum* of Onkelos in the elucidation of many biblical passages, and refers to it many times in the *Moreh*. In *Moreh*, I, 27, he speaks of Onkelos, the proselyte, as being thoroughly acquainted with the Hebrew and Chaldaic languages. See Frankel, *Hodegetik*, p. 322, and Bacher, *Die Bibelexege Moses Maimunis*, pp. 38-42.
19. [↑](#) *Shabbat*, 30 b; *Pesahim*, *loc. cit.*: שאין השכינה שורה לא מתוך עצלות ולא מתוך עצבות ולא מתוך שחוק ולא מתוך קלות ראש. לא מתוך דברים בטלים אלא מתוך דבר שמחה של מצוה. Cf. *Moreh*, II, 36 (end).
20. [↑](#) *Ex.* XXXIII, 18.
21. [↑](#) *Ibid.*, XXXIII, 20.
22. [↑](#) The corporeal element in man is a screen and partition that prevents him from perceiving abstract ideals, as they are. It is absolutely impossible for the human mind to comprehend the Divine Being, even though the corporeal element were as pure as that of the spheres. The Scriptural passages Ps. XCVII, 2 and XVIII, 12 express in figurative language this idea, that, on account of our bodies, we are unable to comprehend God's essence (*Moreh*, III, 9).
23. [↑](#) *Ex.* XXXIII, 23. Cf. *Yesode ha-Torah*, I, 10. "But my face shall not be seen" (*Ex.* XXXIII, 23) means that God's true existence, as it is, cannot be comprehended (*Moreh*, I, 37), and "thou shalt see my back" (*Ex. loc. cit.*) signifies that!; God allowed Moses to see that which follows Him, is similar to Him, and is the result of the Divine Will, i. e., all things created by God (*Moreh*, I, 39). Cf. also *Moreh*, I, 21 and 54. See, on the interpretation of "my back" (אֲחֵרִי) and "my face" (פָּנִי), Kaufmann, *Attributenlehre*, p. 405, and n. 72.

24. [↑](#) See *supra* c. I, p. 45 n. 3.

25. [↑](#) *Sukkah*, 28a; *Baba Batra*, 134a. See Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 114, n. 5.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCERNING THE NATURAL DISPOSITION OF MAN^[1]

It is impossible for man to be born endowed by nature from his very birth with either virtue or vice, just as it is impossible that he should be born skilled by nature in any particular art. It is possible, however, that through natural causes he may from birth be so constituted as to have a predilection for a particular virtue or vice, so that he will more readily practise it than any other.^[2] For instance, a man whose natural constitution inclines towards dryness, whose brain matter is clear and not overloaded with fluids, finds it much easier to learn, remember, and understand things than the phlegmatic man whose brain is encumbered with a great deal of humidity. But, if one who inclines constitutionally towards a certain excellence is left entirely without instruction, and if his faculties are not stimulated, he will undoubtedly remain ignorant. On the other hand, if one by nature dull and phlegmatic, possessing an abundance of humidity, is instructed and enlightened, he will, though with difficulty, it is true, gradually succeed in acquiring knowledge and understanding. In exactly the same way, he whose blood is somewhat warmer than is necessary has the requisite quality to make of him a brave man. Another, however, the temperament of whose heart is colder than it should be, is naturally inclined towards cowardice and fear, so that if he should be taught and trained to be a coward, he would easily become one. If, however, it be desired to make a brave man of him, he can without doubt become one, providing he receive the proper training which would require, of course, great exertion.

I have entered into this subject so thou mayest not believe the absurd ideas of astrologers, who falsely assert that the constellation at the time of one's birth determines whether one is to be virtuous or vicious, the individual being thus necessarily compelled to follow out a certain line of conduct. We, on the contrary, are convinced that our Law^[3] agrees with Greek philosophy, which substantiates with convincing proofs the contention that man's conduct is entirely in his own hands, that no compulsion is exerted, and that no external influence is brought to bear upon him that constrains him to be either virtuous or vicious, except inasmuch as, according to what we have said above, he may be by nature so constituted as to find it easy or hard, as the case may be, to do a certain thing; but that he must necessarily do, or refrain from doing, a certain thing is absolutely untrue.^[4] Were a man compelled to act according to the dictates of predestination, then the commands and prohibitions of the Law would become null and void, and the Law would be completely false, since man would have no freedom of choice in what he does. Moreover, it would be useless, in fact absolutely in vain, for man to study, to instruct, or attempt to learn an art, as it would be entirely impossible for him, on account of the external force compelling him, according to the opinion of those who hold this view, to keep from doing a certain act, from gaining certain knowledge, or from acquiring a certain characteristic. Reward and punishment, too, would be pure injustice, both as regards man towards man, and as between God and

man.^[5] Suppose, under such conditions, that Simeon should kill Reuben. Why should the former be punished, seeing that he was constrained to do the killing, and Reuben was predestined to be slain? How could the Almighty, who is just and righteous, chastise Simeon for a deed which it was impossible for him to leave undone, and which, though he strove with all his might, he would be unable to avoid? If such were the true state of affairs, all precautionary measures, such as building houses, providing means of subsistence, fleeing when one fears danger, and so forth, would be absolutely useless, for that which is decreed beforehand must necessarily happen. This theory is, therefore, positively unsound, contrary to reason and common sense, subversive of the fundamental principles of religion, and attributes injustice to God (far be it from Him!). In reality, the undoubted truth of the matter is that man has full sway over all his actions. If he wishes to do a thing, he does it; if he does not wish to do it, he need not, without any external compulsion controlling him. Therefore, God very properly commanded man, saying, "See I have set before thee this day life and the good, death and evil therefore choose thou life",^[6] giving us, as regards these, freedom of choice. Consequently, punishment is inflicted upon those who disobey, and reward granted to the obedient, as it is said, "If thou wilt hearken", and "If thou wilt not hearken".^[7] Learning and teaching are also necessary, according to the commands, "Ye shall teach them to your children",^[8] "and ye shall do them and observe to do them",^[9] and, similarly, all the other passages referring to the study of the commandments. It is also necessary to take all the precautionary measures laid down in the Law, such as, "Thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof; that thou bring not blood upon thy house",^[10] "lest he die in the battle",^[11] "wherein shall he sleep?"^[12] , and "no man shall take to pledge the nether or the upper millstone",^[13] and many other passages in regard to precautions found in the Law and the Prophets.^[14] The statement found in the sayings of the Rabbis, "All is in the power of God except the fear of God"^[15] is, nevertheless, true, and in accord with what we have laid down here. Men are, however, very often prone to err in supposing that many of their actions, in reality the result of their own free will, are forced upon them, as, for instance, marrying a certain woman, or acquiring a certain amount of money. Such a supposition is untrue. If a man espouses and marry a woman legally, then she becomes his lawful wife, and by his marrying her he has fulfilled the divine command to increase and multiply. God, however, does not decree the fulfillment of a commandment. If, on the other hand, a man has consummated with a woman an unlawful marriage, he has committed a transgression. But God does not decree that a man shall sin. Again, suppose a man robs another of money, steals from him, or cheats him, and then uttering a false oath, denies it; if we should say that God had destined that this sum should pass into the hands of the one and out of the possession of the other, God would be preordaining an act of iniquity. Such, however, is not the case, but rather that all of man's actions, which are subject to his free will, undoubtedly either comply with, or transgress, God's commands; for, as has been explained in Chapter II, the commands and prohibitions of the Law refer only to those

actions with regard to which man has absolute free choice to do, or refrain from doing. Moreover, to this faculty of the soul (i. e. the freedom of the will) "the fear of God" is subservient, and is, in consequence, not predestined by God, but, as we have explained, is entirely in the power of the human free will.

By the word "all" (הכל), the Rabbis meant to designate only natural phenomena which are not influenced by the will of man, as whether a person is tall or short, whether it is rainy or dry, whether the air is pure or impure, and all other such things that happen in the world, and which have no connection with man's conduct.

In making this assertion that obedience or disobedience to the Law of God does not depend upon the power or will of God, but solely upon that of man himself, the sages followed the dictum of Jeremiah, who said, "Out of the mouth of God there cometh neither the bad nor the good".^[16] By the words "the bad" he meant vice, and by "the good", virtue; and, accordingly, he maintains that God does not preordain that any man should be vicious or virtuous. Since this is so, it behooves man to mourn and weep over the sins and the transgressions he has committed, as he has sinned of his own free will in accordance with what the prophet says, "Wherefore should a living man mourn? Let every man mourn because of his sins".^[17] He continues, then, to tell us that the remedy for this disease is in our own hands, for, as our misdeeds were the result of our own free will, we have, likewise, the power to repent of our evil deeds, and so he goes on to say, "Let us search through and investigate our ways, and let us return to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands to God, in the heavens". ^[18]

As regards the theory generally accepted by people, and likewise found in rabbinical and prophetic writings, that man's sitting and rising, and in fact all of his movements, are governed by the will and desire of God, it may be said that this is true only in one respect. Thus, for instance, when a stone is thrown into the air and falls to the ground, it is correct to say that the stone fell in accordance with the will of God, for it is true that God decreed that the earth and all that goes to make it up, should be the centre of attraction, so that when any part of it is thrown into the air, it is attracted back to the centre. Similarly, all the particles of fire ascend according to God's will, which preordained that fire should go upward.^[19] But it is wrong to suppose that when a certain part of the earth is thrown upward God wills at that very moment that it should fall. The *Mutakallimun*^[20] are, however, of a different opinion in this regard, for I have heard them say that the Divine Will is constantly at work, decreeing everything from time to time.^[21] We do not agree with them, but believe that the Divine Will ordained everything at creation, and that all things, at all times, are regulated by the laws of nature, and run their natural course, in accordance with what Solomon said, "As it was, so it will ever be, as it was made so it continues, and there is nothing new under the sun".^[22] This occasioned the sages to say that all miracles which deviate from the natural course of events, whether they have already occurred, or, according to promise, are to take place in the future, were fore-ordained by the Divine Will during the six days of

creation, nature being then so constituted that those miracles which were to happen really did afterwards take place. Then, when such an occurrence happened at its proper time, it may have been regarded as an absolute innovation, whereas in reality it was not.^[23]

The Rabbis expatiate very much upon this subject in the *Midrash Koheleth* and in other writings, one of their statements in reference to this matter being, "Everything follows its natural course".^[24] In everything that they said, you will always find that the Rabbis (peace be unto them!) avoided referring to the Divine Will as determining a particular event at a particular time. When, therefore, they said that man rises and sits down in accordance with the will of God, their meaning was that, when man was first created, his nature was so determined that rising up and sitting down were to be optional to him; but they as little meant that God wills at any special moment that man should or should not get up, as He determines at any given time that a certain stone should or should not fall to the ground.^[25] The sum and substance of the matter is, then, that thou shouldst believe that just as God willed that man should be upright in stature, broad-chested, and have fingers, likewise did He will that man should move or rest of his own accord, and that his actions should be such as his own free will dictates to him, without any outside influence or restraint, which fact God clearly states in the truthful Law, which elucidates this problem, when it says, "Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil".^[26] The *Targum*, in paraphrasing this passage, explains the meaning of the words *mimmenu lada'at tob wara'*. Man has become the only being in the world who possesses a characteristic which no other being has in common with him. What is this characteristic? It is that by and of himself man can distinguish between good and evil, and do that which he pleases, with absolutely no restraint. Since, then, this is so, it would have even been possible for him to have stretched out his hand, and, taking of the tree of life, to have eaten of its fruit, and thus live forever.^[27]

Since it is an essential characteristic of man's makeup that he should of his own free will act morally or immorally, doing just as he chooses, it becomes necessary to teach him the ways of righteousness, to command and exhort him, to punish and reward him according to his deserts. It behooves man also to accustom himself to the practice of good deeds, until he acquires the virtues corresponding to those good deeds; and, furthermore, to abstain from evil deeds so that he may eradicate the vices that may have taken root in him. Let him not suppose that his characteristics have reached such a state that they are no longer subject to change, for any one of them may be altered from the good to the bad, and vice versa; and, moreover, all in accordance with his own free will. To confirm this theory, we have mentioned all these facts concerning the observances and the transgressions of the Law.

It now remains for us to explain another phase of this problem, which arises from the fact that there are several Scriptural passages in which some think they find proof that God preordains and forces man to disobedience. This being an erroneous opinion, it becomes our duty to explain these passages,

since so many people are confused regarding them. One of these is that in which God said to Abraham, "and they (the Egyptians) will make them (the Israelites) serve, and they will afflict them".^[28] "Is it not evident", it is claimed, "that God decreed that the Egyptians should oppress the seed of Abraham? Then, why did He punish them, since, owing to divine predestination, it was inexorably decreed that they should enslave the Israelites?" The answer to this is as follows. Suppose God had said that of those who were to be born in the future, some were to be transgressors and others observers of the Law, some pious and some wicked. Such would take place, but it would by no means follow from this divine decree that a certain individual would necessarily have to do evil, or that another pious individual would be forced to do good. On the contrary, every evil-doer would become such of his own free will; if he preferred to be a righteous man, it would be in his power, and nothing could prevent him from becoming such. Likewise, if every righteous man preferred to do evil, nothing would hinder him, for God's decree was not pronounced against any certain individual, so that he might say, "It has already been decreed that I do this or that", but [these words] applied to the race in general, at the same time allowing every individual to retain his own free will, according to the very makeup of his nature. Consequently, every Egyptian who maltreated or oppressed the Israelites had it in his own power not to do them any injury unless he wanted to, for it was not ordained that any certain individual should harm them.^[29]

The same answer may also apply to another passage in which God says, "Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and then will this people rise up and go astray after the gods of the stranger of the land".^[30] This is no more nor less than if God had said, "Whoever practises idolatry will meet with this or that treatment", but, if no transgressor should ever be found, then the threat of punishment for idolatry would become nullified, and the curses would all be ineffectual.^[31] The same is true of all punishments mentioned in the Law. As we cannot say that simply because we find the law of stoning for Sabbathbreakers [in the *Torah*] that he who desecrates the Sabbath was compelled to violate it, no more can we maintain that because certain maledictions occur there that those who practised idolatry, and upon whom these curses consequently fell, were predestined to be idol-worshippers. On the contrary, every one who practised idolatry did so of his own volition, and so received due punishment, in consonance with the passage, "Yea they have made a choice of their own ways ... so will I also make choice of their misfortune".^[32]

As regards, however, the words of God, "and I will harden the heart of Pharaoh",^[33] afterwards punishing him with death, there is much to be said, and from which there may be deduced an important principle. Weigh well what I say in this matter, reflect upon it, compare it with the words of others,^[34] and give preference to that which is best. If Pharaoh and his counsellors had committed no other sin than that of not permitting Israel to depart, I admit that the matter would be open to great doubt, for God had prevented them from releasing Israel according to the words, "For I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants".^[35] After that, to demand of Pharaoh that he send them

forth while he was forced to do the contrary, and then to punish him because he did not dismiss them, finally putting him and all his followers to death, would undoubtedly be unjust, and would completely contradict all that we have previously said. Such, however, was not the real state of affairs, for Pharaoh and his followers, already of their own free will, without any constraint whatever, had rebelled by oppressing the strangers who were in their midst, having tyrannized over them with great injustice, as Scripture plainly states, "And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel is more numerous and mightier than we, come let us deal wisely with it".^[36] This they did through the dictates of their own free will and the evil passions of their hearts, without any external constraint forcing them thereto. The punishment which God then inflicted upon them was that He withheld from them the power of repentance, so that there should fall upon them that punishment which justice declared should be meted out to them. The fact that they were prevented from repenting manifested itself by Pharaoh's not dismissing them. This God had explained and told him, namely, that if He had merely wished to liberate Israel, He would have destroyed him and his adherents, and He would have brought out the Israelites; but, in addition to the liberation of his people, God wished to punish him because of his previous oppression of Israel, as it is said at the beginning of the matter, "And also that nation whom they shall serve will I likewise judge".^[37] It would have been impossible to have punished them, if they had repented; therefore repentance was withheld from them, and they continued to keep the children of Israel in bondage, as it says, "For even now I have stretched out my hand, etc. ... but for this cause have I allowed thee to remain".^[38]

No one can find fault with us when we say that God at times punishes man by withholding repentance from him, thus not allowing him free will as regards repentance, for God (blessed be He) knows the sinners, and His wisdom and equity mete out their punishment. Sometimes, He punishes only in this world, sometimes only in the world to come, sometimes in both. Furthermore, His punishment in this world is varied, sometimes being bodily, sometimes pecuniary, and sometimes both at once. Just as some of man's undertakings, which ordinarily are subject to his own free will, are frustrated by way of punishment, as for instance a man's hand being prevented from working so that he can do nothing with it, as was the case of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat^[39], or a man's eyes from seeing, as happened to the Sodomites who had assembled about Lot^[40], likewise does God withhold man's ability to use his free will in regard to repentance, so that it never at all occurs to him to repent, and he thus finally perishes in his wickedness. It is not necessary for us to know about God's wisdom so as to be able to ascertain why He inflicts precisely such punishment as He does and no other, just as little as we know why one species has a certain particular form and not another. It is sufficient for us to know the general principle, that God is righteous in all His ways, that He punishes the sinner according to his sin, and rewards the pious according to his righteousness.

If you should inquire why God repeatedly asked Pharaoh to release Israel which he was unable to do—while he, in spite of the plagues which befell him, persisted in his rebellion and stubbornness, which very rebelliousness and stubbornness was his punishment—and yet God would not in vain have asked him to do a thing which he could not do, then know that, this, too, was a part of God's wisdom, to teach Pharaoh that God can suspend man's freedom of will when it pleases Him to do so. So, God said to him (through Moses), "I desire that thou shouldst liberate them, but thou wilt not dismiss them, so that thou shouldst die". Pharaoh should have consented to release them, and thereby disprove the words of the prophet (Moses) that he was unable to obey, but he had not the power. Thus, a great wonder was revealed to the people, as it is said, "In order that they may proclaim my name throughout the earth",^[41] namely, that it is possible for God to punish man by depriving him of his free will respecting a certain deed, while he, though realizing it, is, however, unable to influence his soul, and return to his former state of freedom of the will. Such was, likewise, the punishment of Sihon, King of Heshbon; for, on account of his former misdeed, to which he was not forced, God punished him by preventing him from granting the request of the Israelites, as a result of which they put him to death, as Scripture says, "But Sihon, the king of Heshbon, would not suffer our passing by him",^[42] etc. What has made this passage difficult for all commentators is their impression that Sihon was punished for not permitting Israel to pass through his land, just as they imagined that Pharaoh and his adherents were punished for not releasing Israel, and so they ask, "How could he (Sihon) be justly punished, since he was not a free agent?" These suppositions are incorrect, and the matter is as we have explained, namely, that Pharaoh and his adherents were punished by God because of their previous oppression of Israel, of which they did not repent, so that there befell them all the plagues; while Sihon's punishment, which consisted of his inability to do the will of Israel, thus resulting in his death, was due to the former deeds of oppression and injustice which he had practised in his kingdom.^[43]

God has, moreover, expressly stated through Isaiah that He punishes some transgressors by making it impossible for them to repent, which He does by the suspension of their free will. Thus, He says, "Obdurate will remain the heart of this people and their ears will be heavy and their eyes will be shut, lest ... they be converted and healing be granted them".^[44] The meaning of these words is so plain and obvious that they need no explanation. They are, however, a key to many unopened locks. Upon this principle also are based the words of Elijah (peace be unto him!) who, when speaking of the unbelievers of his time, said of them, "Thou hast turned their hearts back",^[45] which means that, as they have sinned of their own accord, their punishment from Thee is that Thou hast turned their hearts away from repentance, by not permitting them to exercise free will, and thus have a desire to forsake that sin, in consequence of which they persevere in their unbelief. So it is said, "Ephraim is bound to idols; let him alone",^[46] which means that since Ephraim has attached himself to idols of his own free will,

and has become enamoured of them, his punishment consists in his being abandoned to his indulgence in them. This is the interpretation of the words "Let him alone". To one who understands subtle ideas, this explanation will appeal as being excellent.

Very different, however, is the meaning of what Isaiah said, "Why hast thou let us go astray, oh Lord, from Thy ways, and suffered our hearts to be hardened against Thy fear?"^[47] These words have no bearing upon the foregoing exposition. Their meaning is to be gathered from the context in which they occur. The prophet, bewailing the captivity, our residence among strangers, the cessation of our kingdom, and the sovereignty of the nations over us, says by way of prayer, "O God, if Israel continues to see this state of affairs in which the unbelievers wield the power, they will go astray from the path of truth, and their heart will incline away from Thy fear, as if Thou wast the cause of making those ignorant ones originally depart from the path of truth, as our teacher Moses said, 'Then will the nations which have heard Thy fame say in this manner that because the Lord was not able',"^[48] etc. For this reason, Isaiah said after that, "Return for the sake of Thy servants the tribes of Thy heritage",^[49] so that there should not be a blasphemy of God's name (by the heathens). Likewise, in the "minor prophets", there is found the opinion of those who, following the truth, were nevertheless conquered by the nations at the time of the exile, which passage, quoting their own words, reads, "Every one that doth evil is good in the eyes of the Lord, and in them he findeth delight, or else, where is the God of justice?"^[50] The prophet, quoting their own words which were occasioned by the length of the exile, continues, "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked contritely before the Lord of Hosts? And now we call the presumptuous happy; yea, built are they that practise wickedness"^[51], etc. Then, however, explicitly stating that God, in the future, will reveal the truth, he says, "And ye shall return, and see the difference between the righteous and the wicked".^[52]

These are the ambiguous passages in the Law and Scripture from which it might appear that God compels man to commit transgressions. We have, however, undoubtedly explained the meaning of these verses, and if one examines it very closely, he will find it a truthful explanation. We, therefore, hold to our original contention, namely, that obedience or transgression of the Law depends entirely upon man's free will; that he is the master of his own actions; that what he chooses not to do he leaves undone, although God may punish him for a sin which he has committed by depriving him of his free will, as we have made clear; furthermore, that the acquisition of virtues and vices is entirely in the power of man, in consequence of which it is his duty to strive to acquire virtues, which he alone can acquire for himself, as the Rabbis in their ethical sayings in this very tractate say, "If I am not for myself who will be for me?"^[53]

There is, however, one thing more relating to this problem about which we must say a few words, in order to treat in a comprehensive manner the

subject-matter of this chapter. Although I had not intended at all to speak of it, necessity forces me to do so.^[54] This topic is the prescience of God,^[55] because it is with an argument based on this that our views are opposed by those who believe that man is predestined by God to do good or evil, and that man has no choice as to his conduct, since his volition is dependent upon God. The reason for their belief they base on the following statement. "Does God know or does He not know that a certain individual will be good or bad? If thou sayest 'He knows', then it necessarily follows that man is compelled to act as God knew beforehand he would act, otherwise God's knowledge would be imperfect. If thou sayest that God does not know in advance, then great absurdities and destructive religious theories will result." Listen, therefore, to what I shall tell thee, reflect well upon it, for it is unquestionably the truth.^[56]

It is, indeed, an axiom of the science of the divine, i. e. metaphysics, that God (may He be blessed!) does not know by means of knowledge, and does not live by means of life,^[57] so that He and His knowledge may be considered two different things in the sense that this is true of man; for man is distinct from knowledge, and knowledge from man, in consequence of which they are two different things. If God knew by means of knowledge, He would necessarily be a plurality, and the primal essence would be composite, that is, consisting of God Himself, the knowledge by which He knows, the life by which He lives, the power by which He has strength, and similarly of all His attributes. I shall only mention one argument, simple and easily understood by all, though there are strong and convincing arguments and proofs that solve this difficulty. It is manifest that God is identical with His attributes and His attributes with Him, so that it may be said that He is the knowledge, the knower, and the known, and that He is the life, the living, and the source of His own life, the same being true of His other attributes. This conception is very hard to grasp, and thou shouldst not hope to thoroughly understand it by two or three lines in this treatise. There can only be imparted to thee a vague idea of it.^[58]

Now, in consequence of this important axiom, the Hebrew language does not allow the expression *He Adonai* (the life of God) as it does *He Fara'oh*^[59] (the life of Pharaoh), where the word *he* (in the construct state) is related to the following noun, for the thing possessed and the possessor (in this case) are two different things. Such a construction cannot be used in regard to the relation of a thing to itself. Since the life of God is His essence, and His essence is His life, not being separate and distinct from each other, the word "life", therefore, cannot be put in the construct state, but the expression *Hai Adonai*^[60] (the living God) is used, the purpose of which is to denote that God and His life are one. ^[61]

Another accepted axiom of metaphysics is that human reason cannot fully conceive God in His true essence, because of the perfection of God's essence and the imperfection of our own reason, and because His essence is not due to causes through which it may be known.^[62] Furthermore, the inability of our reason to comprehend Him may be compared to the inability of our eyes to gaze at the sun, not because of the weakness of the sun's light, but because

that light is more powerful than that which seeks to gaze into it.^[63] Much that has been said on this subject is self-evident truth.

From what we have said, it has been demonstrated also that we cannot comprehend God's knowledge, that our minds cannot grasp it all, for He is His knowledge, and His knowledge is He. This is an especially striking idea, but those (who raise the question of God's knowledge of the future) fail to grasp it to their dying day.^[64] They are, it is true, aware that the divine essence, as it is, is incomprehensible, yet they strive to comprehend God's knowledge, so that they may know it, but this is, of course, impossible. If the human reason could grasp His knowledge, it would be able also to define His essence, since both are one and the same, as the perfect knowledge of God is the comprehension of Him as He is in His essence, which consists of His knowledge, His will, His life, and all His other majestic attributes. Thus, we have shown how utterly futile is the pretension to define His knowledge. All that we can comprehend is that just as we know that God exists so are we cognizant of the fact that He knows. If we are asked, "What is the nature of God's knowledge?", we answer that we do not know any more than we know the nature of His true existence.^[65] Fault is found, moreover, with him who tries to grasp the truth of the divine existence, as expressed by the words, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?"^[66]

Reflect, then, upon all that we have said, namely, that man has control over his actions, that it is by his own determination that he does either the right or the wrong, without, in either case, being controlled by fate,^[67] and that, as a result of this divine commandment, teaching, preparation, reward, and punishment are proper. Of this there is absolutely no doubt. As regards, however, the character of God's knowledge, how He knows everything, this is, as we have explained, beyond the reach of human ken.

This is all that we purposed saying in this chapter, and it is now time for us to bring our words to an end, and begin the interpretation of this treatise^[68] to which these eight chapters are an introduction.

1. ↑ The title applies only to the first part of the chapter which is mainly a discussion of human free will, and is to be supplemented by parts of M.'s *Commentary on Abot*, by H. Teshubah, V and VI, and *Moreh*, III, 16-21. On the contents of this chapter, see Jaraczewski, *ZPhKr*, XL VI, pp. 15-15; and Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 62 ff.
2. ↑ Cf. *Eth. Nic.*, II, 1, "The virtues, then, come to be in us neither by nature nor in despite of nature, but we are furnished with a capacity for receiving them, and are perfected in them through custom". This applies to nations as well as to individuals; see *Pirke Mosheh*, c. XXV, fol. 53a.
3. ↑ Cf. *Moreh*, III, 17, *Fifth Theory*.
4. ↑ Saadia was the first Jewish philosopher to dwell at length upon the question of free will (*Emunot we-Deot*, III), being influenced by the discussions of Arabic theologians, although Philo, who generally followed the system of the Stoics, professed a belief in this doctrine (*Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis*, ed. Mangey, p. 279). He was followed by Bahya (*Hobot ha-Lebabot*, III, 8); Ibn Zaddik (*Olam Katan*, p. 69, ed. Jellinek, Leipzig, 1854); Yehudah ha-Levi (*Cuzari*, pt. V, ed. Cassel, p. 418); Abraham Ibn Ezra (*Yesod Morah*, VII); and

Ibn Daud (*Emunah Bamah*, p. 96, ed. Weil, Frankfurt a. M., 1842). For references to passages in M.'s works where he discusses free will, see p. 85 n. 1. M. undoubtedly had *Eth. Nic.* III in mind when he said that "Our Law agrees with Greek philosophy". See especially *Eth. Nic.* III, 5. 7, where are found the following statements, "So it seems as has been said, that man is the originator of his actions", and "if it is in our power to do and to forbear doing what is creditable or the contrary, and these respectively constitute the being good or bad, then the being good or vicious characters is in our power". See Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 5, n. 4, and p. 66, n. 1. Consult on this subject I. Broydé, in *J. E.*, vol. V, art. *Free Will*, and works mentioned there; Wolff, *Acht Capitel, Excursus*, III, pp. 84—85; and Cohen, *Characteristik*, etc., in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, p. 76.

5. ↑ M. mentions the same argument in the *Moreh*, but it had often been advanced before him. See Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 67, n. 2.
6. ↑ Deut. XXX, 15. 19. Cf. *H. Teshubah*, V, 3.
7. ↑ Deut. XI, 27. 28.
8. ↑ *Ibid.*, XI, 19.
9. ↑ *Ibid.*, V, 1.
10. ↑ *Ibid.*, XXII, 8.
11. ↑ *Ibid.* XX, 5 or 7.
12. ↑ Ex. XXII, 26.
13. ↑ Deut. XXIV, 6.
14. ↑ See *H. Teshubah*, V, 4, and *Moreh*, III, 20; cf. Ibn Baud, *Emunah Ramah*, II, 6, 2, p. 96.
15. ↑ *Berakot*, 33b; *Niddah*, 16 b; *Megillah*, 25 a.
16. ↑ Lam. III, 38. This verse is, however, generally translated, "Out of the mouth of God, the Most High, cometh there not evil as well as good?", which is exactly the opposite of M.'s interpretation. This verse is also quoted in *H. Teshubah*, V, 2, where M. states that it is wholly in the power of man to be as righteous as Moses or as wicked as Jeroboam.
17. ↑ Lam. III, 39.
18. ↑ *Ibid.*, III, 40—41. Of. *H. Teshubah*, *loc. cit.*
19. ↑ Aristotle uses the example of a stone and fire, in *Eth. Nic.*, II, 1, to show that nature is not affected by custom. A stone by custom can never be brought to ascend, nor fire do descend. Moral virtues are, however, the result of custom.
20. ↑ See *supra*, c. I. p. 41, n. 2; and p. 77.
21. ↑ Cf. *Moreh*, I, 73. *Sixth Proposition*. See Munk, *Guide*, I, p. 286, n. 3.
22. ↑ Eccles. I, 9.
23. ↑ M. reiterates this view of the miracles in his *Commentary on Abot*, V, 6, which enumerates ten things created on the eve of the Sabbath of the week of creation. See Lipmann Heller, in *Tosefot Yom-Tob*, on this passage; and Hoffman, *Mischnaioth, Seder Nezikin*, Berlin, 1889, p. 353. Cf. *Moreh*, I, 66, and Munk, *Guide*, I, p. 296. M. also supported this view in *Moreh*, II, 29 where he refers to *Genesis Rabbah*, V, 4, and *Exodus Rabbah*, XXI, 6, which read, "When God created the world He made an agreement that the sea should divide, the fire not hurt, the lions not harm, the fish not swallow persons singled out by God for certain times, and thus the whole order of things changes whenever he finds it necessary." Consult on this subject Joel, *Moses Maimonides*, 1876, p. 77 ; Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 69, n. 5; "Wolff, *Acht Capitel, Excursus*, IV; Lazarus, *Ethics*, II, p. 77, n. 1; Kohler, art. *Miracles*, in *J. E.*, vol. VIII, pp. 606-607; Geiger, *Judaism and its History*, p. 348.
24. ↑ *'Abodah Zarah*, 54b. See Lazarus, *ibid.*, II, p. 74 ff.

25. ↑ Cf. M.'s *Commentary on Abot*, IV, 23 (Rawicz, *Commentar*, pp. 89-90); *H. Teshubah*, V, 4, and *Moreh*, III, 17, *Fifth Theory*. See Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 69, n. 6.
26. ↑ Gen. III, 22.
27. ↑ Cf. *H. Teshubah*, V, 1.
28. ↑ Gen. XV, 13.
29. ↑ Cf. *H. Teshubah*, VI, 5.
30. ↑ Deut. XXXI, 16.
31. ↑ Cf. *H. T'shubah*, *loc. cit.*
32. ↑ Isa. LXVI, 3. 4.
33. ↑ Ex. XIV, 4.
34. ↑ M. probably means Abraham ibn Ezra and Ibn Baud. See Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 24.
35. ↑ Ex., X, 1.
36. ↑ *Ibid.*, I, 9, 10.
37. ↑ Gen. XV, 14.
38. ↑ Ex. IX, 15. 16. The same explanation for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is given in *H. Teshubah*, VI, 3. On the withholding of repentance, see Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, p. 332.
39. ↑ See I K. XIII, 4.
40. ↑ See Gen. XIX, 11.
41. ↑ Ex. IX, 16.
42. ↑ Deut. II, 30. Cf. *H. Teshubah*, VI, 3.
43. ↑ M. cannot, however, point to any biblical passage that substantiates his contention that Sihon had previously committed injustice.
44. ↑ Isa. VI, 10, quoted also in *H. Teshubah*, VI, 3.
45. ↑ I K. XVIII, 37, quoted again in *H. Teshubah*, *loc. cit.*, which also refers to Josh. XI, 20.
46. ↑ Hos. IV, 17.
47. ↑ Isa. LXIII, 17.
48. ↑ Num. XIV, 15. 16.
49. ↑ Isa., *loc. cit.*
50. ↑ Mal. II, 17.
51. ↑ *Ibid.*, III, 14. 15.
52. ↑ *Ibid.*, III, 18. Cf. *Moreh*, III, 19.
53. ↑ *Abot*, I, 14. Cf. M.'s commentary on this passage.
54. ↑ M. feels it necessary here to discuss philosophically the prescience of God, which he does reluctantly, as the *Peraḳim* are intended for readers not versed in philosophy. See *Introduction*, p. 11.
55. ↑ For M.'s discussion of God's knowledge, see *Pereḳ Heleḳ*; *H. Teshubah*, V, 5; *Yesode ha-Torah*, II, 8-10; *Moreh*, I, 58, and III, 19-21. See Munk *Guide*, I, p. 301, n. 4.
56. ↑ For a list and the opinions of Jewish philosophers before M. who discussed this problem, see Rosin, *Ethik*, p. 73, n. 5.
57. ↑ Cf. *Moreh*, I, 57: **וְכֵן חַי לֹא בַחֲיִים וְיֹדֵעַ לֹא בַמַּדַּע**, and *Yesode ha-Torah*, II, 10. See Kaufmann, *Attributenlehre*, p. 423, and note 94.
58. ↑ For an exhaustive discussion of the theories which M. merely mentions here, see *Moreh*, I, 50-51, on the attributes of God. See Munk, *Guide*, I, 50, p. 179 ff., *passim*; Kaufmann, *ibid.*, p. 418 ff.; Cohen, *Charakteristik*, etc. in *Moses ben Maimon*, I, pp. 89-90.
59. ↑ Gen. XLII, 15.
60. ↑ Ruth, III, 13.

61. ↑ Cf. *Yesode ha-Torah*, II, 10, and *Moreh*, I, 58 (beg.). See Munk, *Guide*, I, p. 302, n. 3. The expressions **הָי אֱלֹהִים** (II Sam. II, 27), **הָי אֵל** (Job XXVII, 2), and especially **הָי יְהוָה וְהָי נִפְשׁךְ** (I Sam. XX, 3; XXV, 26, and II K. II, 2), and Jer. XXXVIII, 16 substantiate this novel linguistic argument of M. Amos VIII, 14 **הָי אֱלֹהֶיךָ דָן** is used in reference to the gods of idolators.
62. ↑ See Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, XXII, 9.
63. ↑ Cf. *Moreh*, I, 59, "All philosophers say, 'He has overpowered us by His grace, and it is invisible to us through the intensity of His light', like the sun which cannot be perceived by the eyes which are too weak to bear its rays". Cf. Bahya, *Hobot ha-Lebobot*, I, 10. See Munk, *Guide* I, p. 252; Rosin, *Ethik*, pp. 75, n. 4; Kaufmann, *Attributenlehre*, pp. 324-325; 445, n.128; and Wolff, *Acht Capitel*, p. 80, n. 1.
64. ↑ See Hebrew text, c. VIII, p. 55, n. 37.
65. ↑ Cf. *Moreh*, III, 20-21.
66. ↑ Job XI, 7.
67. ↑ In his *Commentary on Abot*, III, 15, M. maintains that the phrase "Everything is foreseen (by God), but freedom of choice is given", is in harmony with his theory of the omniscience of God, which does not, however, deprive man of free will. See Rawicz, *Commentar* p. 75.
68. ↑ I.e., *Abot*